

"In the latter days, the sun shall rise from the west" • Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him)

The Holy Prophet Muhammad Messenger of God

Chapter 21:108

*And We have sent thee not but
as a mercy for all peoples.*

Chapter 33:22

*Verily you have in the Prophet
of Allah an excellent model,
for him who fears Allah and
the Last Day and who
remembers Allah much.*



25 Women: Bearer
of Original Sin or
Paradise

31 Muhammad in
the Bible

16 Muhammad:
A Mercy for
Mankind

27 Prophet
Muhammad and the
Jewish Tribes

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is a religious organization, international in its scope, with branches in over 178 countries in Africa, North America, South America, Asia, Australasia, and Europe. The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community was established in 1889 by Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^{as} (1835-1908) in Qadian, a small and remote village in the Punjabi province of India. He claimed to be the expected reformer of the latter days, the Awaited One of the world community of religions (The Mahdi and Messiah). The Movement he started is an embodiment of the benevolent message of Islam – peace, universal brotherhood, and submission to the Will of God – in its pristine purity. Hadhrat Ahmad^{as} proclaimed Islam as the religion of man: “The religion of the people of the right path” (98:6). The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community was created under divine guidance with the objective to rejuvenate Islamic moral and spiritual values. It encourages interfaith dialogue, diligently defends Islam and tries to correct misunderstandings about Islam in the West. It advocates peace, tolerance, love and understanding among followers of different faiths. It firmly believes in and acts upon the Qur’anic teaching: “There is no compulsion in religion” (2:257). It strongly rejects violence and terrorism in any form and for any reason.

After the passing of its founder, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community has been headed by his elected successors. The present Head of the Community, Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, was elected in 2003. His official title is Khalifatul Masih V or Fifth Successor to the Promised Messiah..



Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (1835-1908)

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Salutations

Muslims follow the name of God’s prophets with the prayer *Alaehis salaam* or ‘may peace be upon him,’ and for the Holy Prophet Muhammad *Sallallahu alaehi wasallam* or ‘may peace and blessings of God be upon him.’ Companions of prophets and righteous personalities who have passed away are saluted by *Radhi-Allaho anho* or ‘may Allah be pleased with him.’ While such salutations have been abbreviated in the text for readability (as, sa & ra respectively), we encourage all Muslims to offer these prayers as if set out in full.

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Commitment to Accuracy

Issue 86, Volume 1: Interview with Frank Levy

In answering the question, “What is the role of God in Judaism and what is God’s relationship with mankind?”, Mr. Levy’s answer should have read, “In Judaism Adonai/ God is creator, father, sovereign, judge, protector and law giver. It is through Torah and the Mitzvot – which are the 613 commandments that inform Jewish behavior and a Jew’s relationship with God, humanity, and the world – *that God expresses God’s love for all humanity.*” The *italicized* portion of the answer was mistakenly omitted.

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From the Holy Qur'an

Al-Ahzab Chapter 33: 22

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِّمَن كَانَ
يَرْجُوا اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ وَذَكَرَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا ۖ

*Verily, you have in the Prophet of
Allah an excellent model, for
him who hopes to meet Allah
and the Last Day and who
remembers Allah much.*

The Seal of Prophethood

Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^{as}, Founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community

The perfect man to whom the Holy Qur'an was revealed, was not limited in his vision, nor was there any deficiency in his sympathy in the sharing of sorrows. Both from the point of view of the time and of the place, his soul was charged with perfect sympathy. He was, therefore, bestowed a full share of the manifestations of nature and he was made *Khatam-ul-Anbiya* (Seal of the Prophets), which did not mean that no one would from then on receive any spiritual grace from him, rather that he possessed the seal of Prophethood and that without the attestation of that seal, no grace can reach anyone, and that for his people, the door of converse with the Divine would never be closed. Beside him, there is no Prophet who possesses the seal of Prophethood. It is only by the testimony of his seal that a Prophethood can be bestowed for which it is a condition that the recipient must be a follower of the Holy Prophet^{sa}. His high courage and sympathy did not wish to leave his people in a condition of deficiency and were not reconciled to the door of revelation, which is at the root of all understanding, being closed. Yet, in order to preserve the sign of the closing of Prophethood, he desired that the grace of revelation should be bestowed through obedience to him and that this door should be closed to anyone who was not his follower. God appointed him *Khatam-ul-Anbiya* in this sense.

Thus it was established till the Day of Judgment, that a person who does not prove being his follower through true obedience and who does not devote his full being to obeying him, cannot become the recipient of perfect revelation. Direct Prophethood has been ended with the Holy Prophet^{sa}; but Prophethood by way of reflection, which means the receipt of revelation through the grace of Muhammad^{sa} will continue till the Day of Judgment, so that the door of perfection of mankind should not be closed and this sign should not disappear from the world that the high resolve of the Holy Prophet^{sa} desired that the doors of converse with the Divine should remain open till the Judgment Day and the understanding of the Divine, which is the basis of salvation, should not disappear.¹

I affirm it with full confidence that the

I say it plainly that a person who believes in anyone as a Prophet after the Holy Prophet^{sa} and breaks the seal of his Prophethood, is accursed. That is why no Prophet can arise after the Holy Prophet^{sa} who has not with him the seal of the Muhammadi Prophethood.

excellences of Prophethood attained their climax in the Holy Prophet^{sa}. The person who sets up a movement in opposition to him and puts forward some verity outside his Prophethood and withdraws from the fountain of Prophethood is false and an impostor. I say it plainly that a person who believes in anyone as a Prophet after the Holy Prophet^{sa} and breaks the seal of his Prophethood, is accursed. That is why no Prophet can arise after the Holy Prophet^{sa} who has not with him the seal of the Muhammadi Prophethood. The Muslims who are opposed to us are involved in the error that they believe in the coming of an Israeli Prophet, who would break the seal of Prophethood. I say that it is a manifestation of the spiritual power of the Holy Prophet^{sa} and of his everlasting Prophethood that 1,300 years after him, the Promised Messiah has appeared under his training and instructions with the same seal of Prophethood. If this doctrine is *kufir* (disbelief), I hold this *kufir* dear. But those whose reason has been darkened and who have not been bestowed any share in the light of Prophethood cannot understand this and hold it as *kufir*; whereas, this is a matter which proves the perfection of the Holy Prophet^{sa} and his everlasting life.²

There is no need to follow the Prophethoods and Books which passed before the Holy Prophet^{sa} as Muhammadi Prophethood comprises all of them, and beside it all ways are closed and all verities are included in it. No new verity will arrive after it as there was no verity before it which is not included in it. Therefore, all Prophethood ends with this Prophethood; and so it should have been, for everything that has a beginning, has also an end, but the Muhammadi Prophethood is not deficient in beneficence. It is more beneficent than all other Prophethoods. Following this Prophethood, one reaches God in a very easy manner, and by following it one is bestowed the bounty of

Divine love and Divine converse more than was possible before. Its perfect follower cannot be called simply a Prophet for this would be an insult to the perfect Muhammadi Prophethood. He can be called a follower of the Holy Prophet^{sa} and a Prophet, both together, for in this there is no insult of the perfect Muhammadi Prophethood, but its grace shines forth even to a greater degree.³

We affirm that the person who moves away in the slightest degree from the law of the Holy Prophet^{sa} is a *kafir* (one who does not believe). When anyone who turns away from following the Holy Prophet^{sa} is a *kafir* in our estimation, then what about one who should claim to bring a new law, or should make a change in the Holy Qur'an and the *Sunnah* (Practice) of the Holy Prophet^{sa} or should abrogate any commandment? In our estimation only that person is a believer who truly follows the Holy Qur'an, and believes it to be the last revealed Book, and accepts the law that the Holy Prophet^{sa} brought into the world, as everlasting, and makes not the slightest change in it, and loses himself wholly in following it, and devotes every particle of his being to its cause, and does not oppose it intellectually or by his conduct. It is then that he would be a true Muslim.⁴

Bibliography:

¹ Haqiqat-ul-Wahi, Ruhani Khaza'in, Vol. 22, pp. 29-30

² Al-Hakam, 10 June 1905, p. 2

³ Al-Wasiyyat, Ruhani Khaza'in, Vol. 20, p. 311

⁴ Al-Hakam, 6 May 1908, p. 5

Editorial

Prophets of God appearing at different times in history have left their marks. Depending on the circumstances they faced, something of their character shined in a great manner. Centuries have passed but aspects of their character remain alive.

Prophet Abraham^{as} is known for his firm faith in the Oneness of God. His conviction against idol worship is an exceptional affair. Prophet Job^{as} experienced pain and suffering but never blamed God for any of his suffering; rather, he looked to God for His

different. It took place in the full light of history. We know what he stood for since Muslim and non-Muslim historians recorded all that he did. The accounts of various occurrences can be verified from many different historical renderings. Without question he existed, preached the word of God and claimed to be a Prophet and a Messenger of God.

There is yet another difference that is of much more importance than the aspect of history. Prophet Muhammad^{sa} embodied the various beautiful character traits of past prophets.

Prophet Muhammad^{sa} stood for the Oneness of God among his people and told them that the 360 idols that they worshipped were worthless. His efforts and conviction

The enemies of Prophet Muhammad^{sa} also left him for dead during the battle of Uhud. He was injured and dead bodies were piled up on top of him. Many Muslims believed at that moment that he was dead. Yet he was alive. God saved him from his enemies, and the suffering he endured for the fulfillment of the Will of God strengthened his faith.

No matter which prophet you believe in, you will find that prophet's noble character reflected in the life of the Prophet Muhammad^{sa}. In fact, Prophet Muhammad^{sa} removed doubts as to the character of previous prophets. He refuted such accusations that Abraham^{as} lied, Jesus^{as} showed disrespect to his mother or that Noah^{as} drank and danced naked. He declared that all these were innocent, sinless prophets of God walking on the path described by God to them. He restored these prophets' dignity.

We can examine the life of Prophet Muhammad^{sa} from many different angles. He was a husband, father, son, friend, teacher, soldier, general, an oppressed, an indigent, a negotiator and a businessman. No matter which aspect of his life you examine, you find God's reflection in his behavior. He was the personified model of His teachings and morality. He practiced what he preached.

His life is worth learning about if only to understand the great religion he established. Billions of people look to him as the ultimate role model and strive to emulate him. He was a king without a crown, a general without any stars, a wealthy man without accumulating any wealth, a powerful man who slept on the floor, and full of awe in front of his enemies but tearful and trembling when praying to God in the middle of the night.

In this issue we have tried to cover a few aspects of the life of Prophet Muhammad^{sa}. We hope our brief treatment generates enough interest among our readers to inspire them to read further about his life and develop a more informed understanding of Islam. Indeed, it is only through knowledge that we can truly understand one another.

He was a husband, father, son, friend, teacher, soldier, general, an oppressed, an indigent, a negotiator and a businessman. No matter which aspect of his life you examine, you find God's reflection in his behavior. He was the personified model of His teachings and morality. He practiced what he preached.

mercy and benevolence. Prophet Moses^{as} fought the vicious forces of his time, namely that of the Pharaoh, to protect his people, never hesitating to place his life in danger for that cause. Prophet Jesus^{as} experienced the wrath of his enemies by being placed on the cross. His enemies' design strengthened his faith, and God saved him from the disgraceful death. He wanted God's will to prevail even as he faced humiliation and disgrace from his enemies.

There are some who question the historicity of prophets. Whether these prophets actually existed is a debate for the scholars of today as it was for the historians of the past. Even the latest prophet of the Children of Israel, Jesus^{as}, has no authentic history. So we rely on the Gospels' account of his life.

The advent of Prophet Muhammad^{sa} was

were so strong that in his lifetime he was able to remove every one of the 360 idols kept in the Ka'aba.

He also suffered at the hands of his enemies personally as did his family and his followers. He did not blame God but looked to Him for His Mercy. For thirteen years in Mecca, he was humiliated in the streets, attacked physically and punished with sanctions. Yet he never lost faith in God.

Prophet Muhammad^{sa} also took up arms in defense of his followers against the fierce forces of his time. He faced armies many times larger than the people standing alongside him for their own defense. It was his faith in God that gave him the courage and bravery to conquer the enemy and then to forgive them. It was at the time of his complete victory that he announced amnesty for his enemies.

Letters to the Editor

Shared sentiments

Is the floor open for questions?

I found the “Q&A” section of the *Muslim Sunrise* [Vol. 86, Issue 1] to be a concise, informative look into the rich teaching and doctrines of the Muslim faith. My upbringing in Catholic school and occasional trips to various Baptist churches during high school left me without a real clue as to views and teachings of other religions. It was refreshing to read the “Q&A” section as it spoke not only to the fundamental tenets of Islam, but incorporated the beliefs of other faiths as well. I would like to see this section continued in future editions of the *Muslim Sunrise*. I hope that the floor remains open to questions from individuals from different walks of faith as communication is the key to fostering better relationships among us all.

Temesgen Zerai Strickland
Forest Park, IL

I read the article on Red Light Shopping [Vol. 86, Issue 1] and am glad to see that I am not the only person on the planet with these thoughts. It disturbs me to see young, healthy looking men on the streets with signs asking for money. Men who seem capable of walking, lifting, etc, yet they beg for money. I refuse to give in and would like to be able to stop the car and offer them employment. Having said all this, when having dinner at a small restaurant just recently, I was pleased to see a man came in with a guitar and settled down at a seat near the front. The man introduced himself and announced that he would be singing a couple of songs for us this evening. The man began playing his five string acoustic guitar, sang his song and even played the harmonica for a bit in-between the song. I was quite impressed with the one-man band trying to make a living. After a few minutes, the man thanked us for listening and started wrapping up his things, leaving a cup nearby for those who would like to make a donation. I can say I was glad to give this man some money.

Jasmine Soto
Cicero, IL

1929-2006

In Memory of: Alhaji Khalil Mahmud

Khalil Mahmud was born on March 7th 1929 in Boston Massachusetts. His father had moved to Boston from the Island of Montserrat in the West Indies in 1922. His mother, also from the British West Indies had moved from her home of Saint Kitts in 1918. His mother passed away when he was only 10 years old.

Growing up in Cambridge in the early 30's Khalil Mahmud was strongly influenced by Jazz music and the big Bands of the time, at a young age became an avid musician, playing the piano with numerous Jazz bands. He was also very studious and took an interest in religion in his teenage years. He was introduced to Islam by a friend and through the auspices of Chaudry Ghulam Yasin learned more about Islam, accepting Islam and Ahmadiyyat at the age of 17. Khalil Mahmud, graduated from Brandeis university in 1956 with a BA in history. In 1957 the Jamat arranged the marriage between Zakiyyah Zakara Ashraf and Khalil Mahmud. It was a good union, Alhamdulillah, that would last almost fifty years, until his last breath.

In 1958, he graduated from Brandeis University with a Masters in History of Ideas. In his pursuit for knowledge he studied at McGill University in Canada where he obtained a BLS and MLS in library science as well as a Diploma in Arabic, in 1962.

He took a position at Harvard University in the Middle Eastern Studies Department as an Arabic cataloger before accepting a position as Deputy Librarian at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria, in

1962. He stayed there until 1976 at which time he was offered the position of University Librarian at Kashim Ibrahim Library, Ahmadu Bello University. He retired from Ahmadu Bello University in 1988, after putting his two eldest sons through university.

He completed studies in various countries including Al-Azhar University in Egypt, additional studies in Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Lebanon, Iraq, Iran, Turkey, and Germany.

A devout Muslim and Ahmadi he took his family to various countries such as Ghana, Sierra Leone, Ivory Coast, Niger, Morocco, India, Syria, Pakistan, Iran, Iraq, Ethiopia, Republic of Benin, Togo, UK, France and The Netherlands in an effort to educate his children about Islam and expose them culturally. He made the pilgrimage to Mecca in 1972 with his wife and three of his children.

Always in pursuit of scholarly excellence, he got an appointment in the United States after “retiring” from ABU, Nigeria. His position as a professor of religion and Archivist at Lincoln University Pennsylvania, afforded him the opportunity to discuss religion and the history of religion at great lengths with young adults, many of whom were greatly influenced by his knowledge and shining example as a devout Muslim.

While at Lincoln he put his last two sons through university and remained there until 1998 when for health reasons he decided to retire again.

Khalil Mahmud sadly passed away after an extended illness on January 29, 2006. He had spent the last 60 years of his life as a devout and righteous Muslim. He is survived by his wife, four sons, (Idris, Shuaib, Luqman and Dawud) one stepdaughter (Hafsah), twelve grand children, and three great grand children. ♦



Khalil Mahmud



An Introduction to Islamic Law

Most world religions are built upon the same basic foundation: God, prophet and follower. The religion of Islam galvanized this structure insofar as its law is derived from these three sources. First, the Holy Qur'an, which is the revealed word of God, serves as the foundation upon which the entire structure of Islam rests. After the Holy Qur'an, the most important Islamic textual material is the Tradition, which is comprised of the Sunnah and Hadith of the Holy Prophet^{sa}. Sunnah is the practice of the Holy Prophet^{sa} while Hadith are his sayings. Ijtihad, or the exercise of judgment, is the third source of Islamic principles and codes, and rests with each individual.

Of the entire blessed Community of Prophets, it is the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa} that is better documented than that of any other prophet – and perhaps any other human – in the history of mankind. Throughout this issue, readers will find the Tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa}. While there are numerous collections of Hadith, there are six compilations considered most authentic, which are collectively known as *Sihhah Sittah* (the Six Authentic Ones). These are:

1. [Sahih Bukhari](#)
2. [Sahih Muslim](#)
3. [Jamia Tirmidhi](#)
4. [Sunan Abu Daud](#)
5. [Sunan Nisai](#)
6. [Sunan ibn Majah](#)

We hope our readers will find a good balance of the Holy Qur'an and Tradition to reflect upon, and, exercising their own judgment (Ijtihad), come to their own conclusions about Islam and the Prophet Muhammad^{sa}.

Happy reading,

***Muslim Sunrise* Editorial Board**

Status and Rights of Women

Islam lays comprehensive guidelines in the Holy Qur'an regarding the spiritual, economic, intellectual and social rights of women.

By Saadia Ahmed

The author Michael H. Hart famously declared that Muhammad, the holy prophet of Islam (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), is the most influential man in history, being “the only man in history who was supremely successful on both the religious and secular levels.”¹ Although Hart discusses the dynamic and revolutionary change Prophet Muhammad^{sa} brought to the lives of thousands of Arabians, and how his influence radically altered the world's landscape, he failed to mention one of his crowning achievements, which was the elevation of the status of women in the 7th century, A.D. In this article, we will recall the condition of women prior to Islam and the changes that the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa} brought in the lives of women through his personal example and through the enactment of the teachings of the Holy Qur'an.

The Pre-Islamic Status of Women

In pre-Islamic Arabia, women were considered as slaves and chattels, who could neither own nor inherit property. As wives,

they had no status, and whatever property they possessed was considered to be owned by their husbands. Some husbands would sell their wives or lose them in bets. In domestic affairs, women had no rights over their children or themselves. If they were abused by their husbands, they had no recourse to divorce. They had no real status in the society, not being respected as wife, mother or daughter. In fact, daughters were considered a shame and were often killed at birth. Women were given little or no education, and had no say in religious matters, and were regarded as being limited in both spirituality and intellect. These abusive conditions existed well into the 19th century in most parts of the world, even in the western and European countries, where some basic rights were given to women only in the beginning of the 20th century. In 1892, feminist economist Charlotte Perkins Gilman published the novella *The Yellow Wall-Paper*, a horrifying depiction of how the medical and legal systems worked together to institutionalize or otherwise isolate ambitious women simply by spousal testimony. Such women were often treated for “mental exhaustion” by being deprived of any “unwomanly” intellectual stimulation whatsoever, including basic writing materials or the right

to hear news or speak to friends.

Status of Women in Islam

However, in 7th century Arabia, Prophet Muhammad's^{sa} advent signaled the end to such conditions. He put an end to atrocities that women were subjected to and announced that a woman has a distinct status in all her roles, and was capable of not only receiving spiritual bounties in the hereafter, but also could take part in the affairs of governing in this world. The Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa} emphasized that a woman's rights need to be protected as much as those of a man.

His teachings and actions demonstrated a profound respect for all the various roles women have in an Islamic society. He taught that for an ideal Islamic society to exist, there must be a social system which upholds the rights and responsibilities of each individual. Such a system would provide a balance in the role and status of men and women, thus putting women on an equal footing with men. The Holy Prophet^{sa} emphasized that Islam lays down comprehensive guidelines regarding the spiritual, economic, intellectual and social rights of women. Prophet Muhammad^{sa} set an example for

“The best among you is the one who treats his spouse well and in that respect I am better than all of you.” (Tirmidhi)

others to follow, as he himself safeguarded women's rights and carried out the commands of Allah to treat women with honor, kindness and dignity. By enacting these Qur'anic teachings in his own daily life, Prophet Muhammad^{sa} essentially formulated a charter of human conduct regarding the just treatment of women.

Rights of Wives in Islam

Every stage of the Holy Prophet's^{sa} life reflects his high regard for women. Although youth is supposed to be a period of wild and lighthearted amusement, the Holy Prophet^{sa} entered this period of his life as a model of chastity and purity. Due to his high moral qualities, friends and foe alike called him 'The Truthful' and 'The Trustworthy'. Hadhrat Khadijah^{ra} was so impressed by his high morals that she made him the leader of her trade convoy that was going to Syria, which was very successful and profitable. Hadhrat Khadijah^{ra} was so happy with his spotless character and fair and honest dealings, that she sent a proposal of marriage to Muhammad^{sa} through his uncle, Hadhrat Abu Talib^{ra}. At that time, the Holy Prophet^{sa} was twenty-five years old and Hadhrat Khadijah^{ra} was forty years old and had been widowed twice. He started his married life with a widow, and spent the best part of his youth with her.

The Holy Prophet's^{sa} treatment of his own wives, and his devotion to them, was well known and respected. His wives themselves testified to the fact that he was the best among men in treating his wives. Hadhrat Ayesha^{ra} testified that “his conduct was a reflection of the Holy Quran” and Hadhrat Umm-e-Salamah^{ra} instructed that

before her death, she should be buried with her face turned towards the tent where she met the Holy Prophet^{sa} for the first time after her marriage. Hadhrat Ayesha^{ra}, who was only twenty at the time that the Holy Prophet^{sa} died, is known to have said after

his demise that when he was alive there was hardly ever any food in the house. On one occasion after his death, she received cornmeal as a gift from Hadhrat Umar^{ra}, but when she tried to take a bite of the soft bread she was so overcome by memories of her

life with the Holy Prophet^{sa} that she could not swallow and started to cry with grief. Such was the magic of our Holy Prophet's^{sa} loving treatment of his wives.


Although there are reports of his wives sometimes losing their temper with him, never once is he reported to have lost his or retorted in the same manner. He is never known to have addressed them harshly. In the context of the rights of wives the Holy Prophet^{sa} said:

“The best among you is the one who treats his spouse well and in that respect I am better than all of you.” (Tirmidhi)

The Holy Prophet^{sa} always treated the relatives and friends of his late wife Hadhrat Khadijah^{ra} with respect and kindness. Likewise, he treated the relatives of his wet-nurse Halimah in the same respectful manner. Once a relative of Halimah visited the Holy Prophet^{sa} and he immediately stood up and spread a sheet for her to sit upon. When someone inquired about the guest, he introduced her as close relative of Halimah, and said that he respected her like she was his own mother.

Hadhrat Ayesha^{ra} narrates that the Holy Prophet^{sa} always helped her in the daily household chores. He mended his own clothes and shoes, fetched water himself for his own use, and would never seek help in these matters. (Bukhari, Ahmed)

The farewell address of the Holy Prophet^{sa}, delivered during



The farewell address of the Holy Prophet^{sa}, which he delivered in Mecca during his last pilgrimage:

O men, you have some rights against your wives, but your wives also have some rights against you. Your right against them is that they should live chaste lives, and not adopt ways, which may bring disgrace to the husband in the sight of his people. But if the behavior of your wives is not such as would bring disgrace to their husbands, then your duty is to provide for them food and clothing and shelter, according to your own standard of living. Remember, you must always treat your wives well. God has charged you with the duty of looking after them. When you married, God appointed you trustees of those rights. You brought your wives to your homes under the law of God. You must not, therefore, abuse the trust, which God has placed in your hands’.

the course of his last pilgrimage to Mecca, teaches about human equality without discrimination of any race or color:

"O men, you have some rights against your wives, but your wives also have some rights against you. Your right against them is that they should live chaste lives, and not adopt ways, which may bring disgrace to the husband in the sight of his people. But if the behavior of your wives is not such as would bring disgrace to their husbands, then your duty is to provide for them food and clothing and shelter, according to your own standard of living. Remember, you must always treat your wives well. God has charged you with the duty of looking after them. When you married, God appointed you trustees of those rights. You brought your wives to your homes under the law of God. You must not, therefore, abuse the trust, which God has placed in your hands."

time, such as those that relate to slaves, widows or an adopted son's divorced wife.

Rights of Mothers in Islam

In connection with the respect, honor and status of woman as a mother, the Holy Prophet^{sa} set very clear guidelines. Once a man came to ask permission to join in the fighting taking place in the defence of Islam. The Holy Prophet^{sa} asked him if his parents were alive. When the companion replied in affirmative, the Holy Prophet^{sa} advised him that, "Then find your striving (jihad) in serving them." (Bukhari, Muslim)

The Holy Prophet^{sa} repeatedly said that:

"Paradise lies under the feet of your mothers." (Nasa'i)

Once a man came to the Holy Prophet^{sa} and asked, "Messenger of Allah! Who is

give to her. The woman divided it between her two daughters, and did not eat it herself. Hadhrat Ayesha^{ra} narrated this incidence to the Holy Prophet^{sa}, who said:

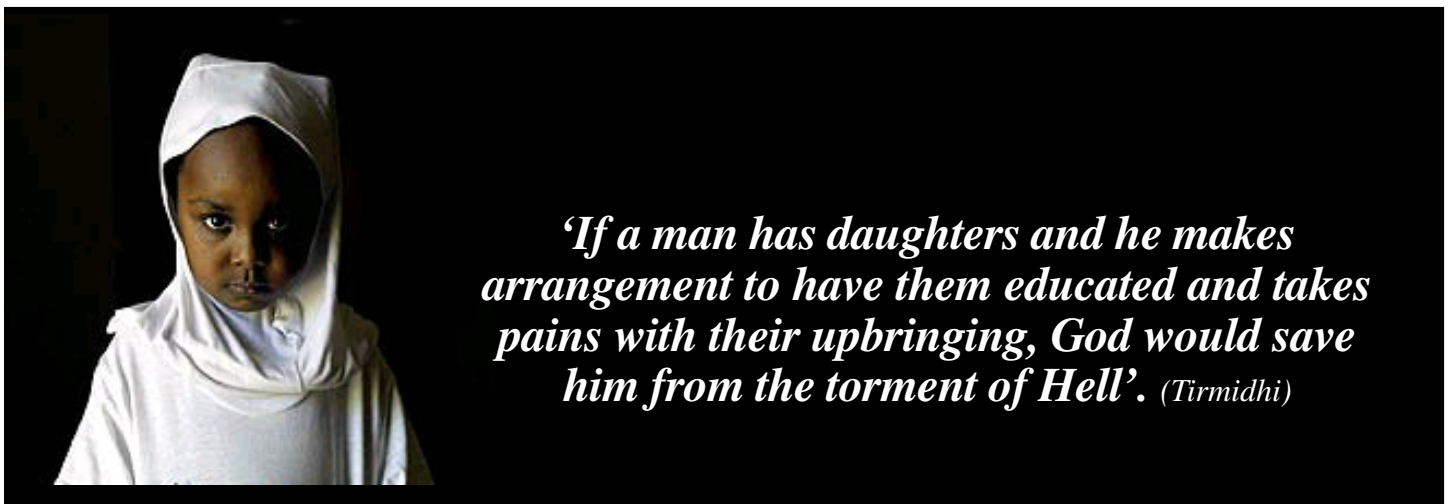
"Whoever is thrown into trial on account of his daughters, they are a screen for him from hellfire." (Life of Muhammad)

He also has said that:

"If a man has daughters and he makes arrangement to have them educated and takes pains with their upbringing, God would save him from the torment of Hell." (Tirmidhi)

Islamic Teachings Concerning Rights of Inheritance for Women

The Holy Prophet^{sa} was very serious in improving the condition of women in society and on securing for them a position



The Holy Prophet^{sa} married twelve times in his lifetime, and one of the allegations that critics levy against him was that he was a womanizer. It is worth bearing in mind, however, that all his wives except Hadhrat Ayesha^{ra} were widows. He had a monogamous relationship with Hadhrat Khadija^{ra}, who was his first wife and fifteen years his senior, till her death around the age of 68. Although she was very wealthy at the time of their marriage, she gave away most of her wealth in charity for the advancement of poor, orphans and widows. All his other marriages were contracted to set a precedent for his followers or to abolish certain customs prevalent at that

best entitled to my good service and devotion?" He answered, "Your mother". The man inquired further, "And after that?" The Prophet^{sa} replied again, "Your mother." When the man inquired again with the same question, the Prophet^{sa} said for a third time, "Your mother." Finally, when the man inquired a fourth time, the Prophet^{sa} then replied: "Now your father, and then your relatives in order of relationship." (Abu Daud)

Rights of Daughters in Islam

To take care of a daughter tenderly is greatly emphasized in the sayings of the Holy Prophet^{sa}. Hadhrat Ayesha^{ra} narrates that once a woman came to her with her two daughters asking for charity. She gave the woman a date, as she had nothing else to

of dignity and fair and equitable treatment. Islam was the first religion which conferred upon women the right of inheritance and divorce. In England, these rights were only conferred to women by the passing of Equity law in the early 19th century. The Equity law had a liberalizing effect upon the legal rights of women in the United States. Mississippi passed the first Married Woman's Property Act, followed by New York in 1848. Many similar acts were passed in the next two decades, providing women in some states with a measure of security in their own property and allowing married women to own property separate from their husbands. In divorce law, however, the divorced husband generally kept legal control of both children and property. Until 1935, married women in England did not have the full right to own property and to enter

into contracts at par with unmarried women. Only after 1920 was legislation passed to provide working women with employment opportunities and pay equal to men. Not until the early 1960s was a law passed that equalized pay scales for men and women in the British civil service.

The Holy Qur'an establishes daughters as heirs, along with the sons, to the property left by their parents. In the same way, a mother is made an heir to her son's or daughter's property, and a wife is made an heir to her husband's property. When a brother becomes an heir of his deceased brother's property, a sister is also an heir to that property. No religion or law before Islam had so clearly and firmly established a woman's right of inheritance and her right to possess property. In Islam, a woman is the absolute owner of her own property and her husband cannot obtain any control over it by virtue merely of their relationship. A woman is at full liberty to deal with her property as she chooses. A woman has been granted the right to initiate divorce and the right to keep the children till a certain age.

Intellectual Rights of Women

It is misunderstood that Islam does not permit equal opportunities to women to seek knowledge with men. The Holy Prophet^{sa} said in this regard,

*"Seeking knowledge is the duty of every Muslim man and Muslim woman."
(Pathway to Paradise)*

Islamic Injunctions Concerning Kind Treatment towards Women

The Holy Prophet^{sa} was so careful to treat women kindly that those around him not previously accustomed to looking upon women as partners found it difficult to accommodate themselves to the standards that the Prophet^{sa} was anxious to maintain. Hadhrat Umar^{ra} relates, "My wife occasionally sought to intervene in my affairs with her counsel and I would admonish her, saying that the Arabs had never permitted their women to intervene in their affairs." She would retort: "That is all in the past. The Holy Prophet^{sa} lets his

"Take care of the glass! Take care of the glass!", a phrase of gentle kindness that reminded the men that women were among the party and that they would suffer discomfort if the camels and horses they rode on were put to full gallop. (Sahih Bukhari)

wives counsel him in his affairs and he does not stop them. Why don't you follow his example?" (Abu Daud)

If during any of his journeys women were also among the party, he would always direct that the caravan should move slowly and by easy stages. On one such occasion when the men were eager to push forward, he said:

"Take care of the glass! Take care of the glass!", a phrase of gentle kindness that reminded the men that women were among the party and that they would suffer discomfort if the camels and horses they rode on were put to full gallop. (Sahih Bukhari)

Once during a battle, confusion arose among the ranks of the mounted soldiers and their animals became unmanageable. The Holy Prophet^{sa} fell from his horse and some women also fell from their mounts. One of his companions, who was riding a camel immediately behind the Prophet^{sa}, jumped down and ran towards him. The Holy Prophet^{sa}'s foot was still in the stirrup. He released it hastily and said to his companion, "Don't worry about me, go and help the women."

It was a common practice with the Arabs to inflict physical chastisement upon women for every little fault. The Holy Prophet^{sa}

taught that women were equal to men as the creatures of God, and were not the slaves of men and should not be beaten. The Prophet^{sa} admonished men and told them that those who treated women with unkindness could never win the favor of God.

The Holy Prophet^{sa} always exhorted those who had to go upon a journey should finish their errands quickly and return home as soon as possible so that their wives and children do not suffer separation longer than was necessary. Whenever he returned from a journey he always came home during the daytime. If he found night approaching towards the end of his journey, he would camp outside Medina for the night and enter in the morning. He also told his companions that when they returned from a journey they should not come home suddenly, and without giving a notice of their return.

It is ironic that in the present day, Islam is harshly criticized for its treatment of women. The so-called "Islamic" countries of the world are lending credence to these charges by

their actions and laws. The golden example of the Holy Prophet^{sa} is completely forgotten. Countries which are called Islamic usually use teachings regarding treatment of women as a way to express these teachings in their lives and spiritual and intellectual growth. Let us hope that these misconceptions about Islam are removed and that Muslim countries follow the true teachings of Islam, so that Muslim women throughout the world are accorded their freedom, dignity and basic human rights. ♦

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Prophet Muhammad's Treatment of Slaves

By Tahir Mannan

In the most hostile, unclean, immoral, and backward country of Arabia in the 7th century, where Arabs took pride in idolatry, gambling and drinking, where abusive and foul language was part of daily communication, and where corruption abound, there was a man, Muhammad^{sa}, who was destined to change the course of this wretched society into peace, love and devotion. From a social standpoint, one of the long-imparted institutions completely abolished 1400 years ago by this Prophet^{sa} was slavery.

Neither in his implementation of Islamic law (see, the Qur'an at 24:34, 47:5, 23:7, 90:12-14) nor in his own practice did the Prophet^{sa} approve the keeping of slaves. Slaves were only kept during battles fought in defense of Islam and only as an extenuating and temporary measure until law and order was established.

Dozens of recorded sayings of the Holy Prophet^{sa} suggest that slavery was indeed abolished in Islam. On one occasion, the Prophet's companions saw a fellow companion, Al Ma'rur bin Suwaid^{ra}, and his slave wearing similar cloaks. The companions asked Ma'rur bin Suwaid^{ra} why he did so, to which he replied:

"Once I abused a man and he complained of me to the Prophet^{sa}. The Prophet^{sa} asked me: 'Did you abuse him by slighting his mother?' He added: 'Your slaves are your brethren upon whom Allah has given you authority. So, if one has one's brethren under one's control, one should feed them with the like of what one eats and clothe them with the like of what one wears. You

should not overburden them with what they cannot bear, and if you do so, help them [in their hard job]'. " (Bukhari)

On another occasion, the Prophet^{sa} said:

"When the slave of anyone amongst you prepares food for him and he serves him after having sat close to [and undergoing the hardship of] heat and smoke, he should make him [the slave] sit along with him and make him eat [along with him], and if the food seems to run short, then he should

Neither in the law of the Holy Prophet (the Qur'an; 24:34, 47:5, 23:7, 90:12-14) nor in his practices did he approve the keeping of slaves. The only time when a slave was kept was in the time of battles and wars which had to be fought by the Prophet and his companions to uphold the very institution of liberty and freedom, especially freedom of religion which was a matter of an individual's heart. So the sayings and practices of the Holy Prophet on this issue were only for the time of battles, battles which were decidedly and conclusively won by the Muslim forces, otherwise from the dozens and dozens of recorded sayings of the Holy Prophet slavery was indeed abolished in Islam.

spare some portion for him [from his own share]. " (Muslim)

The Prophet^{sa} went so far as to not recommend use of the term "slaves": "[O]ne should not say, my slave (Abdi), or my girl-slave (Amati), but should say, my lad (fatai), my lass (fatati) and my boy (ghulami)" (Bukhari). In several other Hadith, we find the Prophet^{sa} to be sensitive to the needs of slaves. For example, he ordered Muslims to buy slave boys and slave girls the same quality of clothes and gifts that they would

buy for their children. He also ordered adult Muslims not to hit or be violent to slaves.

The Prophet^{sa} imparted his sympathetic view of slaves to others. He advised and ordered his devoted companions to purchase as many slaves as they can and to set them free. His close companion, Hadhrat Abu Bakr^{ra}, purchased many slaves from the pagan Arabs and immediately set them free or gave them to other notable Muslims to care for them. One such slave was Hadhrat Syedna Bilal^{ra}, whom the Prophet^{sa} revered so much that he let him have the honor of calling out the first Adhaan (call to prayer) in Islam. Many of the Prophet's^{sa} first companions were poor people and slaves, all whom the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa} always cherished as the backbone and foremost among Muslims. The Prophet^{sa} commanded: "Whoever frees a Muslim slave, Allah will save all the parts of his body from the (Hell) Fire as he has freed the body-parts of the slave." Sayd bin Marjana^{ra} said that he narrated that Hadith to 'Ali bin Al-Husain^{ra} and he freed his slave, for whom Abdullah bin Ja'far had offered him 10,000 Dirhams or 1,000 dinars. Even if one did not have the money to manumit a slave by himself, the Prophet^{sa} taught,

"Whoever frees his share of a common slave and he has sufficient money to free him completely, should let its price be estimated by a just man and give his partners the price of their shares and manumit the slave [completely]." (Bukhari)

Finally, the Prophet^{sa} taught that Muslims should marry those slave women who were set free after bondage. He himself married a bondwoman after she was freed and gave her full stature and measure.

The Prophet's^{sa} view of slavery is perhaps best captured by Hadhrat Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmood Ahmad^{ra} thus:

"We maintain that of all divine messengers and Prophets of God, of all founders of different creeds, faiths and religious systems, of all social reformers and philanthropists, and of all those teachers and leaders of men who at any time in any land and in any form, contributed to the social uplift and moral and spiritual regeneration of humanity; the share of Muhammad^{sa}, the Holy

Prophet of Islam, was by far the largest. And one of the greatest services to mankind of this greatest and noblest of men was his unequivocal and emphatic condemnation of and the effective measures he took to abolish those social injustices that were practiced by one section of humanity against another. His mind rebelled and revolted against the then prevalent idea that man could be bought, sold and treated by men like chattel. His ideal of human brotherhood and the inborn and inherent equality of all men could scarcely be reconciled with the practice of slavery, which was so widespread as to have become inextricably interwoven and deeply rooted in the social conditions and ideas of his time. His heart burnt to see the inequities and enormities practiced by man upon man. He grieved and pined for this unfortunate section of humanity. He would if he could abolish altogether by a stroke of the pen a system so repugnant and revolting, so destructive of all human instincts, of all that distinguishes man from beast and brute. But this institution had become an integral

part of the whole fabric of human society in his time. To abolish it all of a sudden was neither wise, nor practicable or even possible. It should have meant a deathblow to the entire existing social order. The sudden emancipation in hundreds of thousands of those persons who having been held in bondage for generations had lost all initiative to lead an independent life, would have serious consequences upon the whole moral tone of society. Jobless and workless they would have stooped to all sorts of immoral acts. This was exactly what the Holy Prophet^{sa} sought to avoid and he did succeed in avoiding it. On the other hand, he laid down precepts and injunctions, which were calculated to do away with slavery gradually, but surely and effectively." (*Tafseer-e-Kabeer*, Short Commentary of the Holy Quran, p. 1857)◆

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Muhammad: A Mercy for Mankind



By Imam Mubasher Ahmad

In the Holy Qur'an, in Sura Al-Anbiya, Verse 108, Allah the Exalted says to the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa}:

“And we have not sent you save as a mercy for all peoples.”

This verse of the Holy Qur'an clearly and emphatically designates the quality of mercy as the most consequential and the most prominent feature in the character of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa}. It also emphasizes the need of mercy as the most pressing and crucial for the whole of mankind. The need for mercy has no historic limits or geographical boundaries.

This verse of the Holy Qur'an precisely declares that the sole purpose of Allah - by sending the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa} to mankind - was nothing but mercy for all the nations for all times to come.

The Qur'anic declaration: “And We have sent you not save as a mercy for all the peoples” (21:108) gives significant dimensions to his benevolence. To fully appreciate the comprehensiveness of Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa} being sent by Allah as a mercy to all mankind, we have to understand the concept of *Rahmat*, or mercy, in Qur'anic context.

First, in the Holy Qur'an, it is made very clear that the objective of the creation of mankind is *Ibadat* or the worship of Allah. To become a true *Abd* (servant) of Allah, man is asked to first take in and then reflect the attributes of Allah on a human scale. The Qur'an says:

“Adopt the color of Allah, and there is nothing better than the color of Allah; and Him alone do we worship.”

Thus, to adopt the noble attributes of Allah and to reflect them in our human interactions is the very purpose of life. Through this, we strengthen the natural bond between God and ourselves.

Now, referring to His attributes, Allah declares:

“And My mercy encompasses all things.”

Mercy is God's overwhelming, all comprehensive, and all pervasive attribute. The Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa} was the greatest of all of Allah's servants, and as such he adopted the color of Allah perfectly by submerging his personality completely in all of Allah's attributes. He reflected the color of Allah in his daily conduct towards others. He absorbed Allah's attributes to the final limits of human endeavors.

The title “*Rahmatul-lil-Alameen*” (Mercy for all Peoples) tells us that he was not just a merciful man in the ordinary sense, showing kindness to his contemporaries. The attribute of mercy in his character was not just one solitary ray of light; it was rather the full outburst of sunshine in its entire spectrum, in its most benevolent and magnificent glory, embracing all, missing none.

As mercy is the fundamental, encompassing and overwhelming attribute of Allah, the same was the case with the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa}. All his actions, thoughts and feelings were basically expressions of Allah's mercy for mankind. Without any exaggeration, it is true to say that Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa} was mercy personified.

Anyone who reads the life of Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa} in detail may come to the obvious conclusion that he was indeed a kind and tender-hearted man. He was, without a doubt, gentle and

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compassionate towards his friends, neighbors, relatives, close companions, followers and even strangers. He set a shining example of loving care and compassion for the needy, the sick, the handicapped, the hungry, the widowed and the orphaned.

He was always at the forefront in protecting the rights of the poor, the slaves, the economically exploited, the weak and the subjugated. There is no one equal to his social contributions in removing the evils of oppression and inequity. He was the greatest benefactor of women, slaves and prisoners of war. His life is replete with glorious incidents when he healed the pain and anguish of many who suffered. Through his heart-winning attitude he was able to reform hard-core criminals into benevolent members of the society.

His "punishment" to prisoners of war was to ask them to teach others how to read and write, and thus, earn their freedom by freeing others from the clutches of illiteracy.

He was heroically magnanimous in dealing with his enemies. Most of his enemies were hateful, cruel and deadly, and yet in response they received his prayers and charity of heart. Those who had wanted to take his life were given a new spiritual life, a rebirth of their morals and virtues.

Those who tortured him, threw filth upon him, laid thorns in his way, showered rocks on him, causing him bleed from head to toe; in response they all received from him nothing but love, comfort and mercy.

Many had tried to take his life away, but once touched by his mercy, they ended up laying down their own lives to protect him

from any harm. The brutal scoundrels and vagabonds of the town of Taif, who shamelessly insulted him and chased him out of their town, throwing rocks on him, causing him to bleed profusely, they also received his prayers, forgiveness and security. The Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa} became a Shield of Mercy between them and the aroused wrath of God.

There was a time when a price was fixed on his head. The open invitation for his assassination came with the offer of a reward of one hundred red camels. A Bedouin horseman by the name of Suraqa pursued him into the desert during his flight from Mecca to Medina. But at the end of his vicious pursuit, not only did Suraqa receive the Prophet's forgiveness, but also received a prophetic gift of great historic significance. He was told by the Prophet^{sa} that one day he would wear the gold bangles of the King of Persia. And indeed, this gift he did receive in the era of Hadhrat Umar^{ra}, the second Khalifa (Successor) of the Prophet of Islam.

When the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa} triumphantly entered the city of Mecca with his ten thousand saintly followers, the vicious Meccans were completely subdued. Earlier, the Meccans had crossed all boundaries of human decency, they had committed every conceivable atrocity towards the Prophet^{sa} and his followers over an extended period of two decades. Their monstrous crimes against the weak and helpless believers in Islam had made them deserving of the most severe punishments. When Mecca was conquered by the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa}, the same Meccans were standing in front of the Prophet, terrified, trembling.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa} asked them what they thought

Spiritual rain descends upon mankind from the heavens in various forms, such as knowledge, wisdom, revelations, true dreams, visions and acceptance of prayers. The Holy Qur'an, the best and perfect guidance for mankind, full of wisdom and knowledge, is a mercy of Allah for mankind.

should be their punishment. They knew the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa} well, and they pleaded in one voice for his mercy.

And mercy they did receive. The Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa} declared:

"Go! All of you are free. This day, no one will harm you. May God forgive you; he is the Most Merciful of all the merciful."

As he said these noble and compassionate words, his own eyes were filled with tears.

On that momentous day in history, many dimensions of his mercy were witnessed. In the rough and rocky streets of Mecca, Hadhrat Bilal^{ra}, an Ethiopian slave who had accepted Islam, used to be dragged in the burning summer heat, skin at his back being peeled off, and his chest being crushed under the weight of burning hot stones. His former master was one of the cruelest Meccans imaginable. On the day when Mecca was conquered, justice required that Hadhrat Bilal's sufferings and torture should receive full retribution. On entering Mecca, memories of the merciless treatment at the hands of Meccans must have flashed back into Hadhrat Bilal's mind. It was but natural. And to think of getting even would have been justifiable. The Holy Prophet Muhammad's^{sa} mercy quenched Hadhrat Bilal's natural thirst for retribution. But, instead of giving Hadhrat Bilal^{ra} the mere satisfaction of retribution, Hadhrat Bilal^{ra} received a far greater satisfaction and recompense. He was made a sanctuary for the lives of his oppressors. He was given the banner of security. The Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa} announced that whosoever took refuge under Hadhrat Bilal's banner, he would be granted amnesty. What a wonderful and beautiful way of showing mercy - both for the oppressor and the oppressed. The downtrodden black slave instantly became the victorious benefactor of mankind; he became the life-saver of his most bitter foes.

Thus, undoubtedly the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa} was indeed the most merciful, considerate, compassionate man in history. The noble precepts set out by him are everlasting and always refreshing. Measured by all possible standards, he stands out as the most towering figure in history as far as demonstrated quality of his personal mercy is concerned.

The Holy Qur'an pours a flood of light on the concept of mercy by tying it with various other virtues. For example, Allah's Mercy is coupled with His Guidance (16:64), Healing (17:83), Righteousness (27;197), Abundance (24:10), Love (30:21), and Joy (30:36).

But most importantly, Allah's Mercy is expressed through the Revival of the Dead (17:82) and Giving New Life to the Barren.

For example, the Holy Quran says:

"After they have despaired, it is He Who sends down rain and spreads out His Mercy. And He is the Protector, the Praiseworthy." [42:29]

"And He it is Who sends the winds as glad tidings before His mercy; and We send down pure water from the clouds, that We may thereby give life to a dead land, and give it for drink to Our creation - cattle and men in large numbers." [25:49-50]

For the dead and barren land, life giving rain descends from the clouds carried on the winds of glad tidings. The same is the case of Allah's mercy over morally and spiritually dead people. Allah's mercy descends upon them in every age to rejuvenate the dying hearts and parching souls.

Spiritual rain descends upon mankind from the heavens in various forms - such as knowledge, wisdom, revelations, true dreams, visions and acceptance of prayers. The Holy Qur'an, the best and perfect guidance for mankind, full of wisdom and knowledge, is a mercy of Allah for mankind. The spiritual reviving power of the Qur'an has been called a mercy many times in various Suras (chapters) of the Qur'an:

Or lest you should say, 'Had the Book been sent down to us, we should surely have been better guided than they.' There has now come to you a clear evidence from your Lord, and a guidance and a mercy. Who, then, is more unjust than he who rejects the Signs of Allah and turns away from them? We will requite those who turn away from Our Signs with an evil punishment because of their turning away. (6:158)

And remember the day when We will raise up in every people a witness against them from amongst themselves, and We will bring thee as a witness against these. And We have sent down to thee the Book to explain everything, and a guidance, - and a mercy, and glad tidings to those who submit to God. (16:90)

Mankind received the perfect gift of mercy from God through the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa}. In the Qur'an, all previous Prophets and the recipients of Allah's Word are called the recipients of His mercy. For example, Nuh^{as} (11:28), Hood^{as} (11:58), Salih^{as} (11:63), Shoaib^{as} (11:94), Loot^{as} (21:75), Zakria^{as} (19:2), Haroon^{as} (19:53), and Isa^{as} bin Maryam (19:21-22) all have been called "mercy" in the Qur'an.

Thus, to fully understand and appreciate the magnitude of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa} as a "mercy for mankind," we have to accept and acknowledge him as the greatest source of Allah's mercy that descended upon human hearts and souls to revive them.

To receive spiritual rain - the heavenly mercy - to revive the dead hearts and sinful souls, obedience to the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa} is a must. Therefore, Allah the Exalted says:

"And obey Allah and the Messenger that you be shown mercy." [3:133]

"And observe prayer and give the Zakat and obey the Messenger, that you may be shown mercy." [24:57]

The Mercy of Allah descends upon those who obey Allah and the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa}. Obedience to the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa} not only revives us spiritually, it also promises us the highest spiritual rewards, the highest spiritual grades.

It also helps us to understand the true significance of another noble title of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa} bestowed upon him by Allah the Exalted in the Holy Qur'an, namely, *Khataman Nabiyyeen*, the Seal of all the Prophets.

“And who so obeys Allah and this Messenger of His, shall be among those on whom Allah has bestowed His blessings, namely, the prophets, the truthful, the martyrs and the righteous; and excellent companions are these. This grace is from Allah, the All Knowing.”

Thus, if man follows in the footsteps of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa}, Allah's mercy is promised in all its vastness, magnificence and benevolence, not only to raise the dead but also to take the revived souls to the highest spiritual plateaus.

The highest forms of mercy that could be conceived – righteousness, martyrdom, truthfulness and prophecy – all are in the waiting for those who walk the way of the Prophet of Islam, the Rahmatul-lil-Alameen. That's why he is called the greatest of the greatest, the best of the best, the Prophet of the Prophets. His base is as Rahmatul-lil-Alameen, and his climax is as Khataman Nabiyyeen. He is Khataman Nabiyyeen because he is Rahmatul-lil-Alameen.

In conclusion, I quote a few passages from the writings of the Imam Mahdi, the Promised Messiah, the founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^{as} of Qadian, in praise of Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa} as a Mercy for Mankind:

“Even in this age a person who obeys the Holy Prophet, peace be on him, is raised from the dead and is bestowed a spiritual life not merely in imagination, but through the display of his righteous effectiveness and of heavenly help and blessings and extraordinary support of the holy spirit. He becomes a unique person from among all mankind, so much so that God Almighty talks to him and discloses His special mysteries to him, and communicates His verities to him, and manifests the signs of His love and favour in him, and causes His help to descend upon him, and places His blessings in him, and makes him the mirror of His *Rahmaniyyat*.”

(*Ayena Kamalte Islam* p. 221)

“When a person believes sincerely in the Holy Prophet, peace be on him, and accepting his greatness, follows him with eagerness and love and obedience, so much so that through perfect obedience, he arrives at the stage of nonexistence, he, on account of this close relationship with him, also partakes of the Divine light which descends upon the Holy Prophet. Then as light and darkness are opposed to each other, his inner darkness begins to be dispelled till no part of it remains inside him and, being strengthened by light, good of the highest type proceeds from him and the light of the love of God shines forth through all his limbs. His inner darkness is wholly dispelled and he enjoys light intellectually as well as in conduct and by the combination of

these lights, the darkness of sin departs from his heart.” (Review of *Religions* Vol. 1 No. 5)

“When we estimate justly, then out of the whole series of Prophets, we find one of high courage and alive and greatly dear to God, the Chief of the Prophets, the pride and the crown of the Messengers, whose name is Muhammad Mustafa and Ahmad Mujtaba. By walking under his shadow for ten days one obtains that light which before him could not be obtained in a thousand years - We have found every light by following the immaculate Prophet and whoever follows him will also find it and he will become so accepted of God that nothing will be impossible for him. The Living God Who is hidden from people, will be his God and all false gods will be trodden under his feet. He will be blessed everywhere and Divine Power will be with him. Peace be on him who follows the guidance” (Siraj Muneer, p. 82).

“How shall we express our gratitude to God who bestowed upon us the good fortune to follow the Prophet who is a sun for the souls of the righteous as there is a sun for the bodies. He appeared in a time of darkness and illumined the world with his light. He was neither tired nor fatigued till he purified all parts of Arabia from associating partners with God. He is the proof of his own truth for his light is present in every age and true obedience to him purifies a person as the clear and transparent water of a river cleanses dirty linen. Who has come to us with a sincere heart and has not witnessed that light, and who has knocked honestly on that door for whom it has not been opened? But the pity is that most people prefer the lower life and do not desire that higher light should enter into them” (*Chashma Marifat*, p. 288).

“The Holy Prophet came into the world so that he might bestow hearing on the deaf who had continued in that condition for hundreds of years. Who is blind and who is deaf? The same one who does not accept the Unity of God and who does not accept this Prophet who revived the Unity of God on the earth; the same Prophet who converted the wild ones into men and then converted them into men possessing true moral qualities, then dyed Them in the Divine color of those who establish their relationship with God; the same Prophet, the sun of righteousness, at whose feet thousands of those who had died of paganism and atheism and evil living were revived and came to life and a sample of the judgment Day was exhibited.

“I have observed that by calling down blessings upon the Holy Prophet, Divine grace in the shape of wonderful light proceeds in the direction of the Holy Prophet, peace be on him, and is absorbed into his breast and then issuing there from numberless streams of it reach everyone deserving them according to his capacity. Certainly no grace can reach anyone without the agency of the Holy Prophet, peace be on him. Calling down blessings on the Holy Prophet brings into movement His Throne from which these streams of light issue. He who desires to obtain the grace of God Almighty should call down Divine blessings on him very diligently so that that grace might be moved”

(*Al-Hakam*, 28 Feb. 1903, p. 7). ♦

The Greatest Worship of God

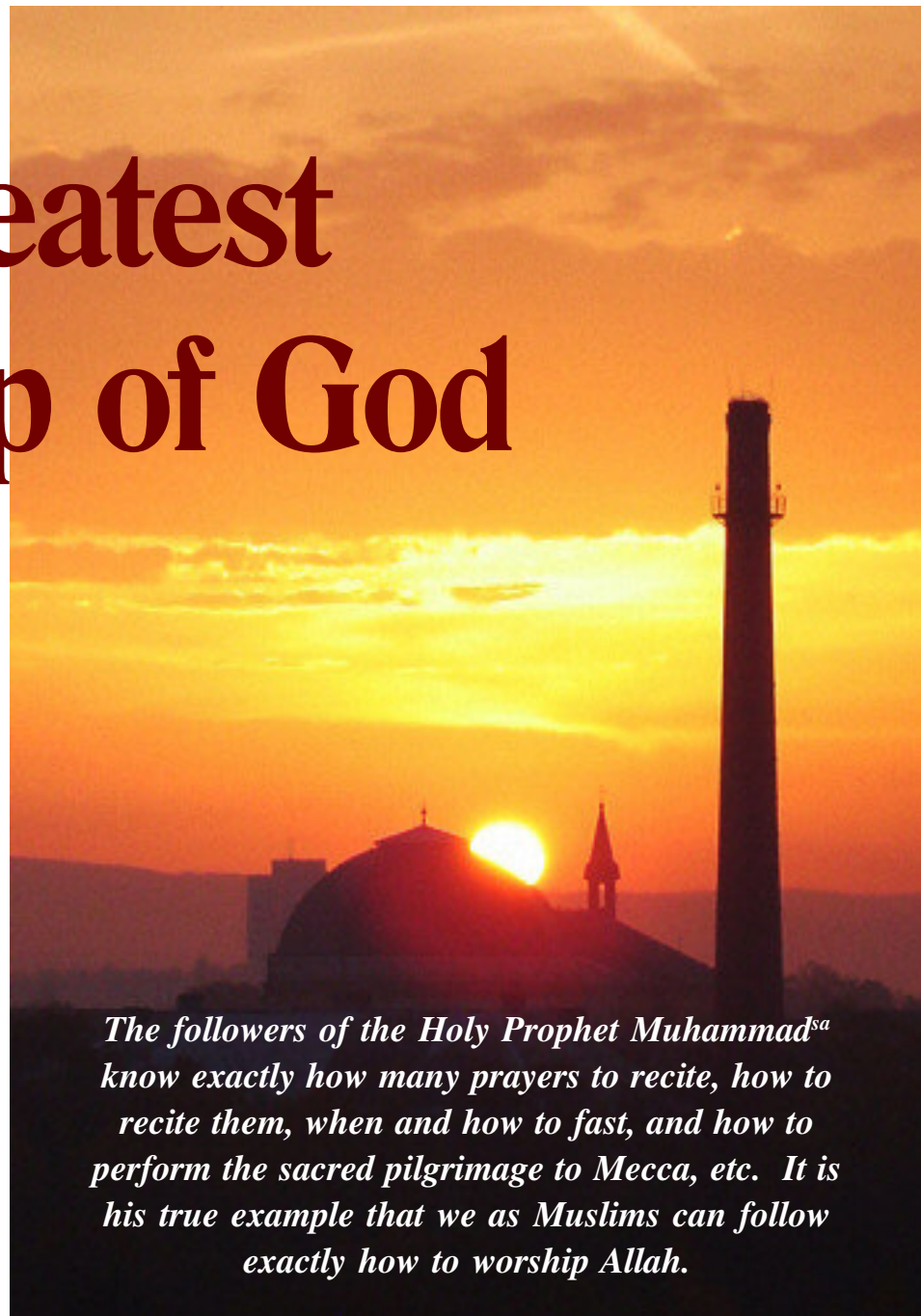
By Falahud Din Shams

On careful examination, we see that worship and prayer are key components of all pre-Islamic religions. Indeed, without worship and prayer, what becomes of the meaning of “faith”? Yet, it seems there are too few traditions in recorded history describing the ways of worship of the prophets from the time of Adam^{as} through the time of Jesus^{as}. There are no details of how the prophets worshipped. How did they prepare themselves for prayer, how many times a day did they pray and in what words did they supplicate on a regular basis?

Early followers of pre-Islamic faiths did not place enough importance to the form and substance of worship. Therefore, the followers of these prophets cannot seem to find the crucial significance of the *form* of worship today. When a prophet cannot be relied upon as an example of prayer or worship, then it is left up to his followers to decide how to go about it. Obviously, the early followers of these religions never found their prophets’ ways of worshipping to be vital to their faith. If it were important enough to the followers of these prophets, the practice of their prophets would have been recorded in detail.

Worship in Islam

Unlike other religions, Islam provides a complete description of worship and prayer; which is derived from the *Sunnah* (practice) of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa}. His methods of worship are detailed clearly in documented history. This model of prayer was and is vital to the followers of Islam.



The followers of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa} know exactly how many prayers to recite, how to recite them, when and how to fast, and how to perform the sacred pilgrimage to Mecca, etc. It is his true example that we as Muslims can follow exactly how to worship Allah.

By his example, Muslims know exactly when and how to pray to God.

The Prophet Muhammad^{sa}’s habit of praying began well before his first revelation from God, before his call to Prophethood in the Cave of Hira. Even before the Angel Gabriel came to him, he would regularly visit the small cave outside of his town to meditate and pray. At this cave, the Ka’aba was visible to him and his attention was drawn to God, yet God’s attributes had not yet been revealed to him. He was inclined to worship even before his God was defined to him.

In Islam, through the example of the Holy

Prophet^{sa}, form and substance for worship are clearly defined and followed. The followers of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa} know exactly how many prayers to recite and how to recite them, know when and how to hold fasts, how to perform the sacred pilgrimage to Mecca, and so on. It is his true example that we as Muslims can follow exactly in worshipping Allah. The Holy Prophet^{sa} ensured that, by acknowledging in the Kalima (Creed) that he is a human being and a worshipper like us, he would not be worshipped as some prophets of earlier religions, who were deified.

5 Pillars of Islam

- *Shahadah: Profession of Faith*
- *Salat: Prayer (five times daily)*
- *Zakat: Funds to support the needy*
- *Saum: Fasting during Ramadhan*
- *Hajj: Pilgrimage to Mecca*

Prayer was so important to the Holy Prophet^{sa} that there never seemed to be a moment where he was not found worshipping God. He worshipped during the day and most of the night as he was commanded. Huzaifah^{ra} and Abu Dharr^{ra} relate that the Holy Prophet^{sa} supplicated on retiring at night: "With Thy name, O Allah, I expire and return to life;" and supplicated on waking: "All praise belongs to Allah Who has brought me back to life after He had caused me to die, to Him is the return." While most people were sound asleep at night, the Holy Prophet^{sa} was awake, praying. His wife, Hadhrat Ayesha^{ra}, relates: "One night, I missed the Holy Prophet^{sa} from his bed so I cast about and discovered that he was in bowing and prostration and was reciting, 'Holy art Thou and Thine is the Praise and there is none worthy of worship save Thee'."

Salat (Formal Prayer)

The first form of the Holy Prophet^{sa}'s worship, salat, changed the world. No one could have imagined it then, but now, the entire world bears witness that the form he used for prayer was a global way of gesturing humility and humbleness. For example, in salat, when we stand with our hands folded, it is a reflection of people in the western hemisphere, who fold their hands in front of themselves as a sign of respect to others. In certain South American cultures and some Asian cultures, touching one's ears is a sign of asking forgiveness, as Muslims do in salat. East Asians show their respect to others by bowing, as Muslims

bow to Allah in their worship to Him. The way in which Muslims prostrate to God, is emulated by cultures in the Middle East and India to show humbleness and humility. The form of Islamic prayer has been clearly defined and ultimately, designed to encompass all people of the entire world.

Surah Fatiha (the opening chapter) of the Qur'an is its essence and was prescribed by the Holy Prophet^{sa} to all his followers as a requisite part of salat. No prayer is complete unless Surah Fatiha is recited.

The Holy Prophet^{sa} emphasized the blessings of congregational prayers, but in an effort to alleviate any undue burden, kept them short. When leading congregational prayers, he would recite a short surah after Surah Fatiha, and instructed other imams to do the same. In his own prayers at home, however, he would often recite two or three longer surahs in just one raka'a.

Hadhrat Huzaifah^{ra} relates that one night he had the opportunity of offering salat alongside the Holy Founder of Islam. Prophet Muhammad^{sa} started reciting Surah Baqarah, which is the longest chapter in the Holy Qur'an. Hadhrat Huzaifah^{ra} assumed that he would recite only 100 [of the 287] verses, but he continued past that mark. He then expected the Holy Prophet^{sa} would finish the entire Surah, which he did. However, upon reciting the entire Surah, he continued on with the next surah, Al-Imran, and after that, he completed reciting Surah Al-Nisa. These three surahs alone make up more than 5 parts of the Holy Qur'an, which has 30 parts in all. Furthermore, as much time as he took to recite all 3 surahs, he spent equal amounts of time in Ruku (bowing) and

Sajda (prostration) as well. Hence, the Holy Prophet^{sa}, when not offering salat in congregation, chose to recite as many surahs - no matter how long they were - as he wished.

While the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa} stressed the importance of formal prayer, he also established the importance of moderation in worship. Hadhrat Anas^{ra} relates that three persons inquired from the wives of the Holy Prophet^{sa} about his practice in the matter of worship. When they were informed, they felt that amount of time spent worshipping would not suffice in their own cases, saying, "There is no comparison between the Holy Prophet^{sa} and us. He has been forgiven in advance." (They meant that they would need to worship more than the Holy Prophet^{sa}.) One of them declared, "I shall always spend the whole night in voluntary prayer." The second announced, "I shall observe a fast every day without interruption." The third said, "I shall keep away from women and shall never marry." The Holy Prophet^{sa} arrived and asked them, "Did you say this and this? Now, I fear God more than you do and am more mindful of my duty to Him than you are, but I observe a fast and also abstain from fasting, and I perform voluntary prayer at night and also sleep, and I consort with my wives. He who turns away from my practice is not of me." The Holy Prophet^{sa} was saying that even though he spent an ample amount of time in worship and prayer, he did not spend every waking moment praying. Although there were days that he would fast, there were also days when he did not keep a fast. There were parts of nights that he prayed and others where he slept. He pointed out to his followers the need to observe his teachings on moderation and not to completely abandon living life for religion. It is noteworthy that in spite of the fact that he performed much worship, whenever he prayed, he always praised Allah and asked for forgiveness. Hadhrat Ayesha^{ra} relates that in his bowing and prostration, the Holy Prophet^{sa} recited repeatedly, "Holy art Thou, O' Allah our Lord, and Thine is the Praise. Forgive me, O Allah."

Saum (Fasting)

Another method of worship that the Holy Prophet^{sa} practiced was fasting. During the holy month of Ramadhan, the Holy Prophet^{sa} adhered to fasting the entire month and devoted his time to prayer. Hadhrat Ayesha^{ra} relates that the Holy Prophet^{sa} never offered more than eleven raka'as at night during Ramadhan or at any other time.



Pilgrimage to Mecca was another form of worship that was established by the Holy Prophet^{sa}. There was no record of how many Hajj he performed before Islam; possibly every year. It is recorded in the history that the Quraish in Mecca used to perform Hajj every year. Therefore, it is assumed that the Holy Prophet^{sa} also performed Hajj once a year, but the exact number is not known.

He would offer four raka'as long and perfect, and then four of the same type and then three. She asked him, "Messenger of Allah, do you sleep before offering Witr [a voluntary prayer]?" He answered, "Ayesha, my eyes sleep but my heart does not." What the Holy Prophet^{sa} was trying to say was that even though his eyes were closed, his heart was still worshipping. Take, for example, when something is bothering us, during our sleep, our subconscious is continuously thinking of that problem. Even during sleep, our mind is focused on this problem. The Holy Prophet^{sa} said that even though his eyes were closed, his mind, heart, and soul were continuously worshipping Allah.

Ramadhan was not the only time of the year that he would fast. He would fast throughout the year for a different number of days. Yet, he never fasted for an entire month unless it was during Ramadhan. Hadhrat Anas^{ra} relates that the Holy Prophet^{sa} would not fast during a month till we began to think he would not fast in this month, and he would go on observing the fast till we thought he would not omit fasting at all during the month; and if one wanted to see him offering prayer at night one could do that; or if one wanted to see him at sleep at night one could do that as well.

There is a long spectrum regarding fasting amongst the pre-Islamic religions. Some religions feel that just refraining from meat on a particular day is considered fasting,

while others, such as Hindu gurus and monks of different faiths, fast for long periods of times. The Holy Prophet's^{sa} method of fasting established the middle ground from previous religions. He never allowed 24-hour fasting, as do certain other religions. He required people to wake and eat breakfast and to break the fast at the prescribed times. Once again, when he stressed the importance of moderation in worship, it was reflected in fasting as well.

Zakat (Almsgiving)

The third form of worship is Zakat, or almsgiving, in the way of God, which was prescribed by the Holy Prophet^{sa}. He established a prescribed method of Zakat. By stating exactly how much and how to give, Muslims know the correct way of worshipping in the form of charity. However, there is no record of him ever paying Zakat. From this information, some have inferred that the prophets of God are not obligated to pay Zakat. The fact is, however, that Zakat is required only on the property that a person keeps for more than a year. But anything that came into the possession of the Holy Prophet^{sa} never remained in his hands for very long. He always gave it away to the needy, therefore, not obligating him to pay Zakat.

One of the meanings of Zakat relates to Sadqa, or charity. In that respect, the Holy Prophet^{sa} was unique in the sense that he gave away everything that was given to him

and even accelerated his giving in the month of Ramadhan. He was very conscious that no money or wealth should be kept in his house. On one occasion, extraordinary money came to him from one of the battles. Distribution of the whole sum could not take place by that evening. So that night, the Prophet Muhammad^{sa} stayed in the mosque and did not enter his house until Hadhrat Bilal^{ra} came and told him that the work was complete and all monies had been distributed.

His desire to give charity to the needy, widows, and orphans is well recorded and cherished by Muslims. One day there was goat meat that was to be distributed. The Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa} had left home and later returned. He asked Hadhrat Ayesha^{ra}, "How did the distribution of the meat go?" She replied by saying, "Nothing could be saved except for one leg." The Holy Prophet^{sa} said, "No, Ayesha, you should have said 'all of it was saved except one leg'." He was trying to show that the meat that was given away to the needy was actually the part that was 'saved.' It was that distributed meat that would be his and Ayesha's^{ra} reward with Allah. The leg that was left for them to eat would not reward them. It would be consumed in this world and would not be saved.

Hajj (Pilgrimage)

Pilgrimage to Mecca was another form of worship that was established by the Holy

Prophet^{sa}. There was no record of how many times he performed Hajj prior to the advent of Islam. It is recorded in history that the Tribe of Quraish in Mecca used to perform Hajj every year. Therefore, it can be assumed that the Holy Prophet^{sa} also performed Hajj once a year, but the exact number is not known.

During his thirteen-year stay in Mecca after the call, he performed two pilgrimages. He also performed Hajj during his tenth year in Medina. It is also confirmed that he performed Umrah (voluntary, Hajj-like pilgrimage performed outside the prescribed calendar dates for Hajj) four times during the time he lived in Medina. He showed everyone precisely how to perform the circuit and what prayers to recite. This is the example and model that pious Muslims follow to this day.

One extremely significant role of Hajj is its display of citizens from all nations worshipping together in one place. People of all different backgrounds, color, and nationalities come together for one purpose and are all equal in the sight of God.

Remembrance of God

The last form of worship that I will discuss is the remembrance of God as practiced by the Holy Prophet^{sa}. Hadhrat Ayesha^{ra} relates that the Holy Prophet^{sa} remembered Allah every moment of his life. There was never a moment where he would not pray to Allah. He was the personified example of the Quranic verse:

"My prayer and my sacrifice and my life and my death are all for Allah, the Lord of the worlds" (6:163).

Every aspect of his life was focused on God. There are literally countless incidents of the Holy Prophet^{sa} remembering God. He prayed at the time of

eating, going to sleep, waking up, riding on a horse, entering a house, putting on new clothes, entering and leaving the mosque, looking in the mirror, and so on. The times are countless. Even while traveling he was known to pray. Hadhrat Anas^{ra} relates: We returned from a journey with the Holy Prophet^{sa} and when Medina came into view he began to repeat, "We are returning safe," turning to our Lord, worshipping Him and praising Him; and he kept it up till we entered the town. He was also known to worship before going to sleep. His wife, Hadhrat Ayesha^{ra}, relates that when the Holy Prophet^{sa} came to bed, he would cup his hands and blow upon his palms and recite the last two chapters of the Holy Qur'an and then pass his hands over his body. Talha ibn Ubaidullah^{ra} relates that, on seeing a new moon, the Holy Prophet^{sa} would

supplicate, "Allah, do Thou cause the appearance of this moon to be a harbinger of peace, faith, security and Islam for us. Thy Lord, O' moon, and my Lord is Allah. May this be a moon presaging guidance and good." Even in battles, he worshipped, offered his prayers, and remembered Allah in different ways. He set up a system whereby one group of Muslims could offer their prayers while another group sat on watch for enemy attacks. Once was the first group concluded their prayers, these groups would trade places so that the latter could have their prayer time. One time during the Battle of Khaiber, the enemy attacked at the time of the Asr (afternoon) prayer. The attack was so viscious that it was impossible to take even one moment for salat. As the sun set, Asr time came to an end. The Holy Prophet^{sa} felt awful about missing his prayer

time. As soon as the attack was over, the very first thing he did was to offer the Asr prayer in congregation.

On every Friday and every Eid celebration, the very last sentence of the Prophet's^{sa} sermon was about the remembrance of Allah. The final portion of the Friday sermon, which is recited in Arabic just prior to the Jumah Salat, are the words:

"Remember Allah so that He will remember you and pray to Him and He will accept your prayers and remembrance of Allah is the greatest virtue."

This is how he finished his sermons every Friday and on Eid, which are the occasions of gathering of the largest groups of Muslims in a city or a particular neighborhood. It was of great importance to him, and he



So for 24 hours a day, there are human beings always offering prayers to God somewhere in the world. No other prophet or religion accomplished this. Other religions, whether they have weekly or even daily services, cannot achieve the 24-7 worship of God around the world.

continuously implanted this in the minds of every Muslim.

Establishment of Worship

In addition to being a perfect model, the Holy Prophet Muhammad's^{sa} greatest accomplishment was the establishment of continuous worship of God throughout the world. To underscore how profound this accomplishment is, let us reflect on one single day on earth: The time that a Muslim rises for Fajr prayer in New York is between five and six o'clock in the morning. While the Muslims in New York are still offering their Fajr prayer, the time for Fajr has come in Chicago and Muslims there are waking to offer their prayers. Next, Muslims in Arizona will rise for Fajr prayers while people in the Midwest are concluding their prayers. Once again, while they are still praying, Muslims on the West Coast are beginning their prayers. This obviously continues through Hawaii, Japan, and further west. When the time for Zuhr prayer (noon time) arrives, the same process starts all over again. So for 24 hours a day, there are human beings always offering prayers to God somewhere in the world. No other prophet or religion accomplished this. Other religions, whether they have weekly or even daily services, cannot achieve the 24-7 worship of God around the world. Furthermore, this is only the *required* salat and does not consider the voluntary prayer that Muslims offer.

Another way to look at this is on a worldwide scale. At any one moment, at various places in the world, it is time for one of the five daily salats. So the five daily, formal prayers are being offered in the world without any break whatsoever.

According to the instructions of the Holy Prophet^{sa}, prayers are taught to Muslim children between the ages of 7 and 10. He established among his followers that children aged 7 should learn prayers. By the age of 10, they should be obliged to recite their prayers every day. This reflects the importance of worship for his followers. That is why it begins in the early years of life and not in adulthood.

The primary substance of these prayers is also prescribed by the Holy Prophet^{sa}, in addition to whatever a person wants to pray for. In formal prayer, all Muslims first recite the same words in Arabic, after which, they are allowed to ask for whatever personal guidance they need. Prescribed prayers are the ones that appeal to Allah and that is why He taught us those. A Muslim is following a perfect script as taught and practiced by the Holy Prophet^{sa}, but can also offer any other prayers that personally appeal to him or her.

The example of the Holy Prophet^{sa} praying all night until his feet became swollen, praying while traveling, and taking part in expeditions, sends a forceful message to his followers regarding the worship of God. There should never be a moment where a Muslim forgets God. Not just through prayer, but through our actions as well. Worship is also prescribed in other forms, such as almsgiving, pilgrimage, and fasting. Remembrance of Allah is vital to being a true Muslim.

In the eyes of Muslims, there can be no human being more perfect than the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa} but his humbleness and humility are noteworthy. He always seemed to be asking for forgiveness for himself. Aghirr Muzani^{ra} relates that the Holy Prophet^{sa} said, "Sometimes I perceive a veil over my heart and I supplicate Allah for forgiveness a hundred times in a day." It is amazing that a man as flawless as the Holy Prophet^{sa} could keep asking for forgiveness and be constantly praying and

supplications of the Holy Prophet^{sa}. In his opinion, whatever happened in the beginning of Islam was the result of the supplications of the Holy Prophet^{sa}, which he had submitted to God Almighty with his tears in the streets of Mecca. All the grand victories which changed the entire aspect of the world were the result of his prayers." (Al-Hakam)

The Promised Messiah writes in his book *Barakatud Dua* (Blessings of Prayers):

"Have you any notion what was the strange event that occurred in the desert country of Arabia when hundreds of thousands of the dead were revived within a brief period and those who had been misguided through generations put on divine colour, and those who were blind obtained sight, and those who had been dumb began to speak of the understanding of the Divine, and the world underwent a revolution which had never been seen or heard of before? It was the supplications

Supplicate in these words: 'Allah, I beg of Thee of good all that Thy Prophet Muhammad begged of Thee and seek Thy Protection against all the evil against which Thy Prophet Muhammad sought Thy protection. Thou art the One who is asked for help and it is for Thee to convey the guidance. There is no strength to resist evil, nor power to do good, except through Allah'."

worshipping Allah, while most Muslims need to be consistently reminded to pray. In fact, the Holy Prophet^{sa} prayed so much, that it could not even be recorded how often or how much he prayed. Abu Umamah^{ra} relates the Holy Prophet^{sa} made many supplications which we were not able to retain in our memories. So we said to him, "Messenger of Allah, you make many supplications of which we do not remember any." He said, "Shall I tell you something which shall comprehend all of them? Supplicate in these words: 'Allah, I beg of Thee of good all that Thy Prophet Muhammad begged of Thee and seek Thy Protection against all the evil against which Thy Prophet Muhammad sought Thy protection. Thou art the One who is asked for help and it is for Thee to convey the guidance. There is no strength to resist evil, nor power to do good, except through Allah'."

The Promised Messiah^{as}, the Holy Founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, has summed up beautifully the result of the worship, prayers and

during dark nights of one who had lost himself in God which raised a clamor in the world, and manifested such wonders as appeared impossible in the case of that unlearned helpless one. Send down Thy blessings and peace, O' Allah, on him and his people according to the number of his grievings and sorrows for his followers and pour down upon him the lights of Thy mercy forever." (Barakatud Dua)

The Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa} was a great model of worship for his followers. He praised God so much, and it a mark of the excellence of his worship that Allah responded to him with such kindness, the like with which He had not done in the past. God Himself declared:

"Allah sends down blessings on the Prophet, and His angels invoke blessings on him. O' ye who believe, so you also invoke blessings on him and salute him with the salutation of peace." (Holy Qur'an 33:57)

Under this commandment, all over the world at every hour of the day, there are believers who join Allah and His angels in sending the salutations and blessings on this Prophet^{sa}. ♦

Women: Bearer of Original Sin or Paradise?

By Maham Khan

The advent of Islam fourteen hundred years ago came at a time when the Arabs used to bury their infant daughters alive, out of fear of shame. Women were considered to be the literal property of men and were handed down to sons and even step-sons, as possessions, when their husbands would pass away. But

bearer of the Original Sin.

The concept of the Original Sin is an important element in the Christian faith. Eve^{ra} was allegedly the first one to commit the sin according to the Bible:

“Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was

As regards the individual nature, woman is defective and misbegotten, for the active force in the male seed tends to the production of a perfect likeness in the masculine sex; while the production of woman comes from a defect in the active force or from some material indisposition, or even from some external influence.”³

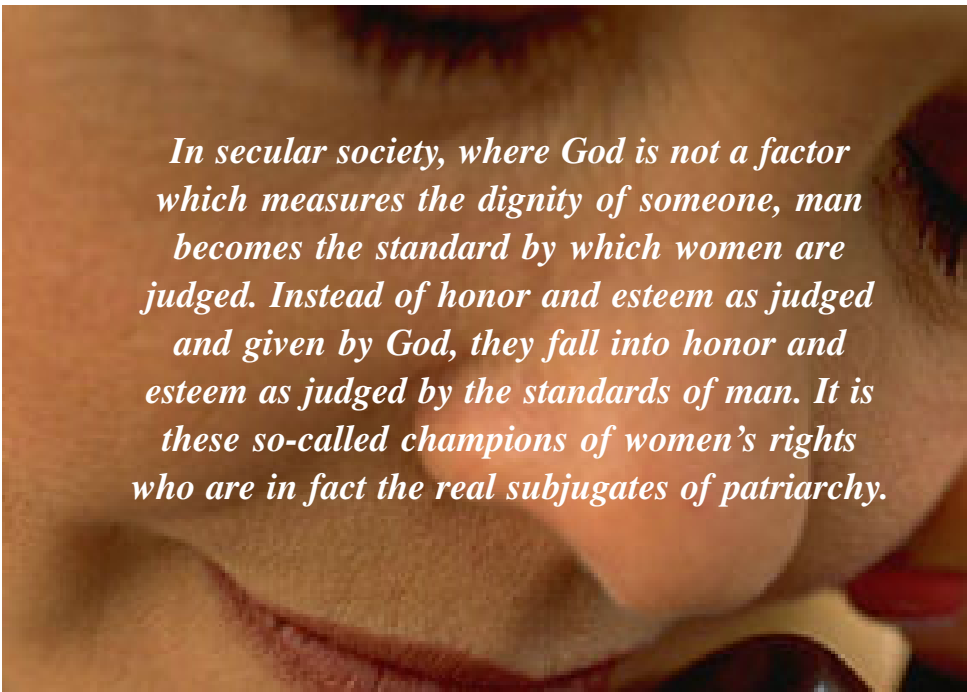
Hence, according to these traditions, women are depicted spiritually as well as intellectually inferior, all because Eve^{ra} “was in the transgression.” Islam, on the other hand, forgave the transgression. It does not believe in the Original Sin and it certainly does not say that Eve^{ra} carries the burden of plucking the apple. Islam came to dignify the status of women, rather than proclaiming them as hellish beings. In contrast to how the Bible portrays the woman, the Qur'an states:

“Surely for men who submit to Allah and for women who submit to Allah, for believing men and for believing women, for devout men and devout women, for truthful men and truthful women, for steadfast men and steadfast women, for humble men and humble women, for charitable men and charitable women, for fasting men and fasting women, for men who guard their chastity and women who guard their chastity, for men who remember Allah much and for women who remember Allah much, for all of them Allah has prepared forgiveness and a mighty reward.” (33:36)

The Qur'an makes it clear that men and women both, are capable of doing virtuous deeds, of becoming believers and acquiring the same noble traits to receive God's favors. However, for a woman, parenthood elevates her spiritual status even higher as the Prophet^{sa} has said that “Paradise lies beneath the feet of the mother.”⁴ She is the one who nurtures and influences her child the most, compared to the father, not to mention the sacrifices that she makes. No wonder why Islam insists on the education of women. Hence, the Qur'an portrays women as equal partners with men in every sphere of life, be it spiritually, morally or even academically.

Today women have progressed in various fields and Islam encourages that. Prophet Muhammad^{sa} has made it compulsory on every believing male and female to acquire knowledge...even if they have to go to China!⁵

That the Qur'an teaches that women are intellectually inferior to men is an utterly



In secular society, where God is not a factor which measures the dignity of someone, man becomes the standard by which women are judged. Instead of honor and esteem as judged and given by God, they fall into honor and esteem as judged by the standards of man. It is these so-called champions of women's rights who are in fact the real subjugates of patriarchy.

when Prophet Muhammad^{sa} preached the message of Islam to the ignorant Arab nation, he broke the shackles of bondage from women and not only freed them, but elevated their status in society. By virtue of just being a woman, they became the gateway to everlasting Paradise.

That Muslims are the great oppressors of woman and the Qur'an has created discrimination between the two genders is one of the most frequent and common allegations leveled against the fair name of Islam. Anti-Muslims claim that the Qur'an deprives women of their rights and has classified them as 'second-class citizens.' Ironically, the ones to criticize are usually Christians, who believe Eve^{ra} to be the

first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.” (1 Timothy 2:11-14)

So when Eve^{ra} sinned, she set to doom the fate of all womankind. Saints in Christianity described woman as an obstacle to spiritual enlightenment. “Woman is the instrument which the devil uses to gain possession of our souls,”¹ says St. Cyprian. St. John Demascene, a prominent 7th century saint, described woman as “a daughter of falsehood, a sentinel of Hell, the enemy of peace; through her, Adam lost paradise.”² Centuries later, St. Thomas Aquinas still considered women as innately flawed:

shameless attack at Islam. "Educate a man and you educate a family; educate a woman, you educate a nation,"⁷⁶ is the Prophet's^{sa} emphasis on a woman's education.

Beginning with early Islam, there have been many women scholars who have been authorities in a variety of subjects which range from religious jurisprudence to science. An outstanding example is Hadhrat Ayesha^{ra}, one of the Prophet's wives, who gave discourses even to men, on both spiritual and secular matters. His first wife, Hadhrat Khadija^{ra}, was a successful businesswoman during an age when women never had any say in their own affairs. To top that, she was the Prophet's^{sa} employer!

However, according to Rabbi Eliezer, who lived in the first century C.E., "If any man teaches his daughter Torah, it is as though he has taught her lechery."⁷⁷ We also read in the Bible:

"Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience as also saith the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church." (1 Corinthians 14:34)

Feminists in the West are fighting hard to earn the right to become church ministers, despite what the Bible says. Such feminists don't have anything to do with the original Judeo-Christian thought. They are only fighting against the State for their self-proclaimed rights. They don't try to understand the rationality behind these religious traditions; just like they couldn't understand why Islam does not allow a woman to lead mixed congregational prayers.

For the same reason, the *hijab* (veil) never fails to shock the Western intellect. They think that the headscarf is a symbol of ignorance and oppression, conveniently over-looking what their own Bible says:

"But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven..."

(1 Corinthians 11:5-6)

Up till now, some Christian sects (e.g. the Amish and the Mennonites), consider the head-covering a mark of a woman's subjection to man and to God. The attire of Christian nuns bears a striking resemblance to the Muslim dress code. Eastern Orthodox Christian women in Europe and Russia still wear the headscarf in public. Orthodox Jews

Islam teaches that for a woman to adorn herself and maintain her beauty is her birthright as granted in the Qur'an. At the same time, for her to display it in public is opposed to her modesty. The only one who will appreciate her beauty is her husband because it is meant for him (Qur'an, 24:31). Islam has made man and woman to serve as a comfort for each other as the Qur'an says: "They are garments for you and you are garments for them." So if the husband is to be his wife's partner, why should she feel the need to appeal to others around her?

consider the bare head "nudity."⁷⁸ Some Rabbis have been quoted to say, "Cursed be the man who lets the hair of his wife be seen..."⁷⁹ However, when a Muslim woman wears the veil, she does it for God; not for her husband as she is not subjected to him.

Islam teaches that for a woman to adorn herself and maintain her beauty is her birthright as granted in the Qur'an. At the same time, for her to display it in public is opposed to her modesty. The only one who will appreciate her beauty is her husband because it is meant for him (24:31). Islam has made man and woman to serve as a comfort for each other as the Qur'an says:

"They are garments for you and you are garments for them."¹⁰

So if the husband is to be his wife's partner, why should she feel the need to appeal to others around her?

In secular society, where God is not a factor which measures the dignity of someone, man becomes the standard by which women are judged. Instead of honor and esteem as judged and given by God, they fall into honor and esteem as judged by the standards of man. It is these so-called champions of women's rights who are in fact the real subjugates of patriarchy. This is the fallacy that prevails in the West, and that has crept into western religious thought.

To try to compete with man by his God-given yardstick is only to expose and reinforce one's own inferiority complex.

Islam teaches that women may go out and pursue an education and career, and indulge in all pure things that their hearts desire, provided, that they don't ignore the needs of their home and family. And it is this distinctive honor which dignifies a woman – in her own unique way – which a Muslim woman considers a privilege. Not even a secular feminist can deny that ultimately the hand that rocks the cradle of the humanity is that of a woman. This is the reverence and beauty that women in Islam enjoy. ♦

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Prophet Muhammad and the Jewish Tribes

By Lubna Malik

Islam is a religion of tolerance and peace. Never seeking to be the aggressor, Islam solely defends one's right to follow one's beliefs and to protect one's land. The Holy Qur'an, the theological and sacred book of Islam, attests to this claim and proclaims that:

Surely, those who believe and the Jews and the Christians and the Sabians – *whichever party* from among these truly believes in Allah and the Last Day and does good deeds, shall have their reward with their Lord, and no fear shall come upon them, nor shall they grieve. (2:63, emphasis added).

This verse of the Holy Qur'an emphasizes that Jews and Christians and Sabians are all to be respected because those that exemplify goodness will be rewarded by God. The everyday practice of this positive thinking about Jews in terms of tolerance and peace is seen nowhere better than in the tumultuous life of the Holy Prophet of Islam, Muhammad^{sa}. Interacting with Christians and Jews, the Prophet of Islam^{sa} practiced kind and compassionate treatment to all. Never did he speak harshly to one of another faith unprovoked. Never did he encourage his companions to practice intolerance or violence against members of another group because of their beliefs. The Jewish people, in particular, posed several challenges to the Prophet^{sa} by way of questioning his authority and attempting to destroy Islam and Muslim community. Upon sequential examination of the life of the Prophet^{sa}, true tolerance and peace are seen by his continuous forgiveness and mercy to a people who never desired anything more than his and his message's destruction.

The Jewish community in Medina

"So as long as they are true to you, be true to them" (9:7). The life cycle of the Prophet^{sa} mandated that until 622, the year of the *hijra*, the Prophet^{sa} would have limited contact with the Jewish community. Upon arriving in Medina, however, the Prophet^{sa} was immersed in a culture where Jews were his immediate neighbors and, after God, his first group of potential allies. Thus, the Prophet's^{sa} first order of business in Medina was ensuring peace, cooperation, brotherhood, and harmony. In this endeavor, the Prophet^{sa} created a treaty between the Medinite Muslims, non-Muslim Arabs, and Jewish tribes of Banu Qainuqa, Banu Nadhir and Banu Quraidhah.

This treaty was ratified by all parties and the prominent point of the treaty was that the Prophet^{sa} was the declared chief executive of Medina and that all matters relating to state were under his auspices.

Even with this awesome power of chief executive awarded to him, the Prophet^{sa} ensured that his new allies were equitably addressed. Realizing that the Jews held different beliefs on the Prophet's^{sa} status as the Messenger of God, it was not incumbent upon them to accept him as the Messenger. The treaty also illustrated great equity between the Muslims and the Jews – so long as the Jews abided by the treaty with the Muslims by way of not making treaties with the enemies of the Muslims, the Jews would not be harmed; so long as the Jews were involved in a joint-effort battle with the Muslims against a common enemy, the Jews would contribute to the cost of war; without reservation, the Jews

would be able maintain their own religion; in the event the Jews were treacherous and breached the treaty, the Muslims would be permitted revenge; if the Muslims were attacked, the Jews would come to their aid, and vice versa. Such conditions were not only reasonable, but just. Such was the nature of the Prophet^{sa}. Such stipulations showed not only the Prophet's^{sa} concern for a powerful military alliance with his Jewish neighbors, but also his commitment to religious freedom and toleration and also to justice in times of betrayal – that all parties had agreed to.

After being established as the chief executive of Medina and having settled peace accords with his neighbors, the Prophet^{sa} began his role as a reformer and sought to eliminate the racial,

ethnic, cultural, tribal, and national distinctions and prejudices that were present in the marriage process by encouraging all people - Muslims, Jews, and non-Muslim Arabs - to marry on the basis of piousness. True to his own admonitions, the Prophet^{sa} married Safiyah^{ra}, a very poor, yet humble, Jewess.¹

While in Medina, a Jew once approached the Prophet^{sa} and told him that a man from the Ansari (the Medinite helper group) had slapped him and as such the Jew was in great distress. The Prophet^{sa} summoned his companion and asked him why he had slapped the man. His companion replied that he did so because the Jew had proclaimed that Moses^{as} was the supreme prophet, even more supreme than the Prophet Muhammad^{sa} and that this assertion on the behalf of the Jew had infuriated him. Rather than siding with his Muslim companion, the Prophet^{sa} became very disturbed and told his companion to never give preference to him over other prophets.

On another occasion, a funeral procession was passing in a street of Medina. When the procession passed by the Prophet^{sa}, he stood up in respect. Seeing the Prophet's^{sa} reaction to the





The Prophet's^{sa} dedication to equitable treatment to Jews in all affairs, whether marriage, freedom of religious expression, respect for other faiths, and even forgiveness to one who sought to take his own life, exemplifies Islam's role as a tolerant and respectful faith. The Prophet's commitment to justice and impartiality were so impressive that the Jews of Medina, although not accepting the Prophet^{sa} as a Messenger of God, brought their religious cases of dispute to the Prophet^{sa} and requested that he come to a decision based on Jewish law for them.

procession, a companion approached the Prophet^{sa} and told him that this funeral procession was for a Jew. The Prophet^{sa} replied, "Was a Jew not a human being?" This single sentence guaranteed that Muslims would respect all humans.

On yet another occasion, a Jewish woman invited the Prophet^{sa} and some of his companions to her home for dinner. Having evil intentions, the Jewish woman had poisoned the food. Under Divine guidance, however, the Prophet^{sa} refused to eat the food. The woman, ashamed of her own act by the Prophet's^{sa} recognition,

admitted her crime. Rather than punishing the woman who had attempted to take his life, the Prophet^{sa} immediately forgave her.

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The Prophet's^{sa} Treatment of the Jews during Hostilities

The initial time after the treaty with the Jews of Medina had been made was a peaceful one where the Jews complied by all of the agreements they had, of their own free will, agreed to and signed to. Expecting the Muslims to be easily defeated by the Quraish, however, the continued success of the Muslims in battle and in conversion of non-Muslims greatly plagued the Jewish tribes and they began seeking to create dissent among the Muslims. Verbal attacks directly against the Prophet^{sa} were also employed by the Jewish tribes; after the 313 Muslims had defeated 1,000 Meccans in the Battle of Badr, the Prophet^{sa} advised the Jewish tribal leaders to accept Islam, to which they responded that the Muslim victory meant nothing because the Quraish were weak and that they, the Jews, would be more than willing to show the Muslims what real fighting meant.

Of the three Jewish tribes that signed the Medinite treaty, Banu Qainuqa was the first to openly breach their agreement with the Muslims by way of planning assassination attempts against the Prophet^{sa}. Not wanting to further the problems, the Prophet^{sa} reacted to

this obvious treason by being compassionate and advising his companions to embody peace and not violence against the hostile Banu Qainuqa. The Jews of Banu Qainuqa, however, only got worse. Once a Muslim woman was shopping at a store owned by a man of Banu Qainuqa; while shopping some other men of Banu Qainuqa pinned up her skirt so that when she stood up from her position, her lower half was made totally visible. As the Muslim woman cried for help and was utterly mortified, the men of Banu Qainuqa laughed with wicked glee. Hearing the cries of the woman,

a nearby Muslim began arguing and fighting with the shopkeeper, who was ultimately killed.

In response to the disgrace of the Muslim woman, the Prophet^{sa} met with the leaders of Banu Qainuqa and, rather than punish them, warned them yet again to mend their ways. Again, the Banu Qainuqa continued in their ways. Greatly perturbed by the betrayal of a former ally, the Prophet^{sa} went himself to seek a peaceful solution from the Banu Qainuqa. However, upon seeing the Prophet^{sa} approaching their gates, the Banu Qainuqa prepared for battle. Left with no choice but to attack the Banu Qainuqa or to be attacked, the Prophet^{sa} led a two-week siege of the Banu Qainuqa, after which they accepted defeat. Rather than the Prophet^{sa} place a punishment on the Banu Qainuqa, they requested the Prophet^{sa} to spare their tribe and to take all of the material possessions. So merciful was the Prophet^{sa} that, even after all that the Banu Qainuqa had done, he accepted their terms even though he could have punished them with the most extreme punishment of Mosaic law, which was executing all of the able-bodied males. In order to protect Medina and the Muslim community, the Prophet^{sa}, after sparing the lives of all of the Banu Qainuqa, exiled the Jewish tribe – a most mild and merciful punishment for treachery and treason.

Even after seeing the mistake of the Banu Qainuqa, the Banu Nadhir chose to side against the Muslims. Kaab bin Ashraf, a leader of the Banu Nadhir, had hoped that the Muslims would lose against the Quraish in the Battle of Badr where they had been severely outnumbered; first doubting the Muslim victory and then becoming very upset upon realization of the truth, Kaab began planning the destruction of Islam and the Muslims with the help of the Quraish and non-Muslim Arab tribes in the country. In Medina, he approached and addressed Muslim women inappropriately, including those of the family of the Prophet^{sa}. Not satisfied with his own disrespectful behavior to innocent women purchasing food for their families, Kaab began to plan the assassination of the Prophet^{sa}. Hearing of Kaab's assassination plot, the Prophet^{sa} prayed that he and all of the Jews be reformed and shown mercy. In response, Allah revealed to the Prophet^{sa} that:

"Ask thou forgiveness for them, or ask thou not forgiveness for them; even if thou ask forgiveness for them seventy times, Allah will never forgive them. That is because they disbelieved in Allah and His Messenger. And Allah guides not the perfidious people" (9:80).

Even after receiving this revelation, however, the Prophet^{sa} continued to pray. A companion of the Prophet's^{sa} asked him why he was praying even after God had told him that it would be to no avail; the Prophet^{sa} replied that perhaps God would grant His Mercy upon the Jews and Kaab if the Prophet^{sa} prayed seventy-one times. This was the Prophet's^{sa} dedication to saving, not condemning, the Jewish people. After word of Kaab's proposed assassination

attempts against the Prophet^{sa} continued for some time, the Prophet^{sa} met with the tribe leaders of Medina and asked them to reach a consensus as what should be done with Kaab for his assassination attempts against the chief executive of Medina, the Holy Prophet^{sa}. This group of leaders, which included the tribe leaders of the Banu Nadhir and the remaining Jewish tribe of Banu Quraidhah, decided that Kaab had committed acts of treason and was punishable by death. After Kaab had been privately put to death by his own foster brother, the Jewish community agreed to live peacefully.

Even after signing the Medinite treaty and then seeing the mistakes of the Banu Qainuqa and Banu Nadhir, the Banu Quraidhah continued in the same treacherous manner and led a rebellion of the remaining Jews against the Muslims. As per the agreed to terms of the treaty, the Prophet^{sa} retaliated by laying siege to the town of the Banu Quraidhah with an army of Muslims. The Jews, not recognizing the siege as just retaliation against their own treason against Medina, became indignant. With time, however, the Banu Quraidhah became distressed by the siege and, in search of understanding their options against the Muslim army, requested that the Prophet^{sa} send in Abu Lubaba bin Mundhar of Aus because the tribe of Aus had once been an ally of the Banu Quraidhah. Complying with the Jewish request, the Prophet^{sa} permitted Abu Lubaba to enter the besieged town. The Banu Quraidhah asked Abu Lubaba if opening the Jewish gates to the Prophet^{sa} and allowing him to do as he wished was the best solution. Abu Lubaba replied, without any knowledge of the

Prophet^{sa} that it was, but that such an action meant death for all Jews. This false statement guaranteeing death of the Jews led to the Banu Quraidhah preparing to fight even more fervently against the Muslims. Upon hearing the problem that Abu Lubaba had created, the Prophet^{sa} became distressed at the coming hardships for both sides.

After three more weeks of the siege, the Banu Quraidhah relented and requested the Prophet^{sa} to send Sa'd bin Muaz, chief of Aus, to settle terms of surrender in the hope that the chief of Aus would be lenient. The Prophet^{sa} agreed, and after meeting with the Banu Quraidhah, Sa'd returned to the Prophet^{sa} and informed him that the Banu Quraidhah had agreed to accept the Prophet^{sa} as an arbiter and were prepared to abide by his decision in relation to their punishment for treason. While Sa'd was relaying this message to the Prophet^{sa}, many people of Banu Quraidhah were nearby screaming for mercy. Sa'd asked both the nearby people of Banu Quraidhah and the Prophet^{sa} if he, Sa'd bin Muaz, decided the punishment of the Banu Quraidhah, would it be permissible? They both agreed. Granted this power by both sides, Sa'd, who was expected to be lenient with the Jews, announced that, in punishment for their treason, all of the able bodied males of Banu Quraidhah



would be put to death, the women and children would be made prisoners of war, and the spoils would be divided amongst the Muslims. The Prophet^{sa} replied that the Banu Quraidhah had sealed their own fate. When asked to speak with Abu Lubaba, the Prophet^{sa} permitted it; when asked to go by Sa'd's judgment, they agreed.

So merciful was the Prophet^{sa}, that even while executing males, the Prophet^{sa} urged them to accept Islam so that they may be shown mercy by God. Of the 400 men of Banu Quraidhah that were executed, each was given a proper burial under the direction of the Prophet^{sa}. Of those to be executed, all of those who asked for mercy were spared. The Prophet^{sa} was asked why he was so merciful to the treasonous Banu Quraidhah and he replied that, as chief executive, it was his duty to show mercy – thus showing that he was inclined to forgiveness and mercy, not punishment. The Prophet's^{sa} mercy and grace extended even further with a leading member of the Banu Quraidhah, Zubair bin Batia. The Prophet^{sa} had not executed him because he had once done a Muslim a favor. After having his life spared, Zubair pleaded to the Prophet^{sa} that his life was worthless while his wife and children as prisoners of war – the Prophet^{sa} returned his family. Zubair then pleaded that he had nothing to sustain his family with – yet again the Prophet^{sa} granted Zubair the restoration of his property. Further, of the women and children kept as prisoners, all were kept well and healthy, many were freed by payment and even more were freed out of sheer grace by the Prophet^{sa}.²

In yet another hostile attack on the part of the Jews, the Prophet^{sa} exhibited great tolerance and mercy. On his return to Medina from the signing of the ten-year peace treaty of the Treaty of Hudaibia with the Quraish, the Prophet^{sa} was encountered by the hostile Jews of Khaiber. Initially, the Prophet^{sa} sought to make peace with the Jews, but all attempts failed. With all other options exhausted, the Prophet^{sa} led an army of 1,000 Muslims against the Jews and easily defeated them. Upon defeat, the Prophet^{sa} granted the Jews very simple terms of surrender: half of the Jewish produce of Khaiber was to be given to the Muslims (which half of each year's produce was to be given was left to the judgment of the Jews).³ This example of such leniency, even after first having tried to avoid fighting with the Jews, illustrates Islam and the Prophet's^{sa} dedication to peace and the respect of the Jewish people.

Thus the entire span of the Holy Prophet's^{sa} interaction with the Jewish community was an embodiment of God's commandments regarding peace. God stated that He would not punish the Jews because they were Jews, but because of their individual acts. Following in suit, the Holy Prophet^{sa} did not treat the Jewish people as they were a condemned group that was doomed to Hell, but as people who had just as much of an opportunity to attain God's Mercy and Blessings as anyone else. Such a firm dedication to moral principles through all times of hardship provides an excellent example of how to treat people of all faiths. ♦

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The Perfect Example of Muhammad^{sa}

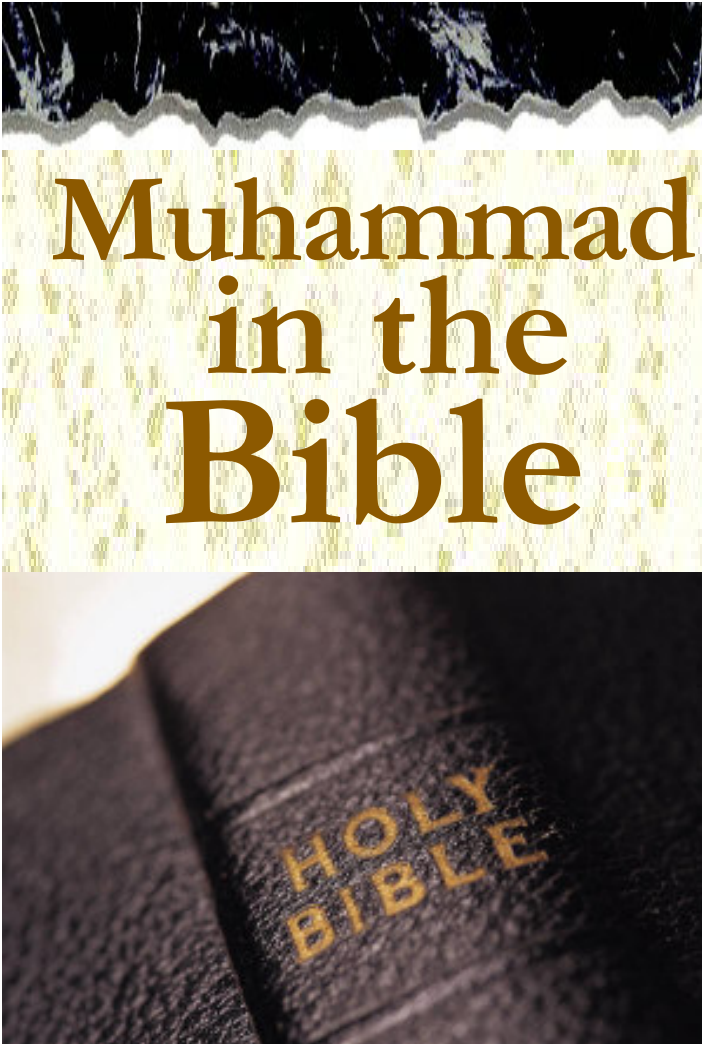
By Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^{as}
Founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community

The man who in his being and his attributes and his actions and through his spiritual and holy faculties set an example of perfection, in knowledge and action and in sincerity and steadfastness, and was called the perfect man was Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be on him.... The man who was most perfect as man and as Prophet, and came with full blessings, and who through a spiritual revival and resurrection manifested the first Judgment in the world and revived the dead world, that blessed Prophet, the Seal of the Prophets, the leader of the righteous ones, the pride of the Prophets, was Muhammad, the chosen one, peace and blessings of Allah be on him.

Our Lord, send down on that beloved Prophet that mercy and blessing that Thou hast not sent down on anyone since the beginning of the world. Had that grand Prophet^{sa} not appeared in the world then we would have no proof of the truth of lesser Prophets like Jonah^{as}, Job^{as}, Jesus^{as} son of Mary, Malachi^{as}, John^{as}, Zechariah^{as}, etc. Though they were favorites and honored and were beloved ones of Almighty God, they are under obligation to this Prophet that they were accepted in the world as true Prophets.

O Allah, send down Thy blessings on him and on his people and on his companions, all of them. Our last word is that all praise belongs to Allah, Lord of the worlds.

[Itmam-ul-Hujjah. Ruhani Khaza'in, Vol. 8, p. 308]



Muhammad in the Bible

*“For had you believed
in Moses ye would
have believed in me,
for he wrote of me; but
if ye believe not in his
writings how will ye
believe in my words?”*

(John 5:46-47)



A lecture delivered by the late J. D. Shams, Imam of the London Mosque in 1941 as part of a series of lectures on “Why the Early Christians Accepted Islam.”

In an address last year, I said that one of the many reasons why Christians, in countries where a religious struggle took place between Christianity and Islam, became Muslim was the marvelous teachings of the Holy Qur'an relating to the personality of Jesus^{as}; being more rational and acceptable than the complicated theological dogmas of the Church.

Today I would like to point to another reason, which led sincere Christians to accept Islam whole-heartedly.

Standard set by Jesus^{as}

We read in the Gospel of St. John that, in order to prove the truth of his claim, Jesus^{as} referred to Moses's^{as} prophecy and rebuked his opponents in these words:

“For had you believed in Moses ye would have believed in me, for he wrote of me; but if ye believe not in his writings how will ye believe in my words?” (John 5:46-47)

This saying of Jesus^{as} clearly shows that appearance of a prophet in accordance with previous prophecies is an absolute proof of his truth; therefore, on the subject of prophecies about the coming of the Holy Prophet of Islam, the Holy Qur'an says:

“And when there came to them an Apostle from Allah verifying that which they have, a party of those who were given the Book threw the Book of Allah behind their backs as if they knew nothing.” (2:102)

Again, it says that the true believers from whom He will ordain His special mercy are:

“Those who follow the Apostle Prophet, the Ummi whom they find written down with them in the Torah and the Gospels.” (7:158)

Besides these two verses, there are many others in which God has turned the attention of Christians and the Jews to the fact that by rejecting the Holy Prophet^{sa} they are rejecting their own Holy Scriptures; the coming of the Holy Prophet^{sa} is in proof of their scriptures. Within the limited time at my disposal, I will mention some of the Biblical prophecies relating to the Holy Prophet of Islam^{sa}.

Promises about the Ishmaelites in Genesis

First to Hagar^{ra}: “I will multiply thy seed exceedingly that it shall not be numbered for multitude.” (16:10)

Then to Abraham^{as}: “This is My covenant which ye shall keep between me and you, and thy seed after thee. Every man-child among you shall be circumcised. And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your skin, and it shall be a token of the covenant between me and you.” (17:10-11)

“And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee, behold I have blessed him and will make him fruitful and will multiply him exceedingly, twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation.” (17:20)

After depriving the Israelites of their spiritual blessings, God fulfilled His covenant with the Ishmaelites by raising the Holy Prophet of Islam from amongst them. His appearance according to these prophecies was in fulfillment of the prayer of Abraham and Ishmael, which they addressed to God, as they raised the foundations of the Ka'aba.

We read in the Holy Qur'an:

“Our Lord! And raise up in them an apostle from among them who shall recite to them Thy communications and teach them the Book and wisdom, and purify them; surely Thou art the Mighty and Wise.” (2:130)

“And Ishmael was 13 years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin.” (17:25)

“And also of the son of the bondwoman will make a nation because he is thy seed.” (21:13)

God said to Hagar^{as} about her son: *“I will make him a great nation.” (Genesis 21:18)*

These verses make the following points:

1. Ishmael^{as} and his descendants were the seeds of Abraham^{as}.
2. God promised to bless them with spiritual gifts and to make them a great nation like Isaac and his progeny.
3. The circumcision of Ishmael^{as} at the age of thirteen leaves no room for doubt that Ishmael^{as} was among the progeny of Abraham^{as} with whom the covenant had been established.

The blessings of the covenant, as Adam Clark writes in his commentary (Gen. 17:14), were both temporal and spiritual.

Bearing in mind these promises, the verse: *“But my covenant will I establish with Isaac^{as}.”* (Gen. 17:21) has no other interpretation than that the covenant, which God made with Abraham^{as}, was first to be fulfilled in Isaac's^{as} progeny. It so happened that prophethood remained in the line of Isaac until the time of Jesus Christ^{as}, who declared to the Israelites:

“Nation bringing forth the fruit thereof.” (Matt. 21:43)

Jesus Christ^{as} here clearly predicts that no more was a prophet to appear from

amongst the Israelites; rather from among another nation, to wit, the Ishmaelites with whom God had made a promise through Abraham^{as}. This promised nation was no doubt the Arabs. For no other nation ever claimed to be the descendants of Ishmael^{as}.

In commentaries on the verse *“And Ishmael will be a wild man, his hand will be against every man.”* (Gen. 16:12), it is mentioned that:

“This prophecy answers to the character of the Bedouin Arabs, who were always feared and dreaded by other men.”

“The Abyssinians, Jews, Persians, Romans and other nations have made war against them, but by no nation, however powerful, could they at any time be permanently subdued.”
(Arnold, *“Koran and Bible”* p.125)

Adam Clark says in his commentary that: *“Bedouins and wandering Arabs are the descendants of Ishmael”* and concerning chapter 17, verse 20, writes: *“From Ishmael proceed the various tribes of the Arabs, called ‘Saracens’ by Christian writers.”*

After depriving the Israelites of their spiritual blessings, God fulfilled His covenant with the Ishmaelites by raising the Holy Prophet^{sa} of Islam from amongst them. His appearance according to these prophecies was in fulfillment of the prayer of Abraham^{as} and Ishmael^{as}, which they addressed to God, as they raised the foundations of the Ka'aba. We read in the Holy Qur'an:

“Our Lord! And raise up in them an apostle from among them who shall recite

to them Thy communications and teach them the Book and wisdom, and purify them; surely Thou art the Mighty and Wise.”
(2:130)

Before the advent of the Holy Prophet^{sa} of Islam, Arabs were despised by all nations.

Edward Gibbons writes of the Arabs, in his *Decline and Fall*: *“In this primitive and abject state, which ill-deserved the name of society, the human brute, without arts or laws, almost without sense of language, is poorly distinguished from the rest of the animal creation.”*

“No doubt before the advent of the Prophet, as mentioned in the Holy Qur'an, most Arabs were as animals in the form of human beings.” (25:45)

Thomas Carlyle has pictured in a few words their condition before and after the coming of the Prophet^{sa}. He writes:

“A poor shepherd people, roaming unnoticed in its deserts since the creation of the world, a prophet was sent down to them with a word they could believe. See the unnoticed becomes world-great. Within one century afterwards, Arabia is at Granada on this end, at Delhi on that.”
(*Heroes and Hero Worship*)

The Prophet like unto Moses

After Abraham^{as}, Moses^{as} in 1451 B.C. gave more particulars of this prophet. God revealed to Moses^{as} thus:

“I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren like unto thee, and

will put my words in his mouth and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him, And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him, But the prophet which shall presume to speak a word in my name which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other Gods, even that prophet shall die.” (Deut. 18:18-20)

Adam Clark, writing about this prophecy in his commentary on the Bible, says:

“This cannot be understood of the ordinary prophets which were raised up in Israel, but of Christ only.”

I am sorry to say that we cannot accept this view; and for good reasons; Firstly, Jesus Christ^{as} never claimed to be like Moses^{as}. Secondly, Jesus^{as} did not fight with his enemies, as Moses^{as} did. Thirdly, Jesus^{as} did not bring a New Law containing new ordinances, as Moses^{as} did. Fourthly, we are told in this prophecy that the prophet will be sent from among the brethren of Israelites, i.e. Ishmaelites. The verses 16-17 of this chapter strongly support this view. All the children of Abraham^{as} were brethren of Ishmael^{as}. (See Genesis 16:-12,25-18.) But

Jesus^{as} was not one of the Ishmaelites. Fifthly, the prophecy further tells us that the prophet “shall speak all that I command him”, whereas Jesus^{as} says: “I have yet many things to say unto you, but you cannot bear them now” (John 16:12). Sixthly, I wonder how Christians will reconcile their belief that Jesus^{as} was put to death on the cross, with this prophecy, which contains no hint that the prophet shall be killed; rather, it says that the false prophet shall die, i.e. shall be killed and destroyed. Seventhly, we read in John 1:20 that in the time of Jesus^{as}, the Jews were awaiting the advent of three persons: Elijah^{as}, Christ^{as} and the prophet. It shows clearly that Christ^{as} and the prophet, according to the belief of the Jews were not one and the same person. Eighthly, there is proof to support our view in the following saying of Peter recorded in Acts 3:20: “And he shall send Jesus Christ which before was preached unto you whom the Heaven must receive until the time of restitution of all things which God has spoken by the mouth of His holy prophets since the world began.” These words evidently imply that we are to expect the fulfillment of those prophecies before the second advent of Jesus^{as}.

Peter then continues, and as an example, mentions the prophet under discussion:

“For Moses truly said unto the fathers: A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up among you of your brethren...” (Acts 3:22)

It is crystal clear from these eight points that Jesus cannot be the object of this prophecy, and that the promised prophet was bound to appear between the first and second advent of Jesus Christ^{as}. It is no wonder that only the Holy Prophet Mohammed (peace and the blessings of God be upon him) has claimed to be the subject of the prophecy. The seven signs mentioned in it were found precisely in his person.

1. The prophet will be raised from among the brethren of the Israelites. The Holy Prophet of Islam^{as} appeared from among the Ishmaelites, brethren of Israelites.

2. He will be the like of Moses^{as}. God says in the Holy Qur'an (73:16):

“Surely we have sent you an apostle to witness against you as We sent apostle to Pharaoh.”

The Holy Prophet^{as} is like Moses^{as}. He was also given a new Law, as was Moses^{as}.

*The Holy Prophet of Islam was given a complete religion, as the Holy Qur'an says:
“Today, I have completed for you your religion and perfected on you my blessings.” (5:4)*

*And at the time of the last pilgrimage, the Holy Prophet, looking to heaven while addressing the pilgrims gathered together on the occasion, said:
“O Lord! I have delivered my message and fulfilled my mission!” “Yea, thou hast”, was the response of the multitudes listening. “O lord! I*

Under the divine will, he had to fight his enemies as had Moses^{as}.

3. The prophecy states that “God shall put words into his mouth”. Thus says the Holy Qur'an: “*Nor speaks he of his own inclination. It is but a revelation which is revealed to him.*” (53:3-4)

4. “*He shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.*”

The Holy Prophet of Islam was given a complete religion, as the Holy Qur'an says:

“*Today, I have completed for you your religion and perfected on you my blessings.*” (5:4)

And at the time of the last pilgrimage, the Holy Prophet, looking to heaven while addressing the pilgrims gathered together on the occasion, said:

“*O Lord! I have delivered my message and fulfilled my mission!*” “*Yea, thou hast*”, was the response of the multitudes listening. “*O lord! I beseech Thee bear Thou witness unto it.*”

5. “*He shall speak in my name.*” Thus we find that the first chapter that was revealed to the Holy Prophet^{sa} says: “*Read in the name of your Lord.*” (96:2)

Moreover, in fulfillment of this prophecy, every chapter of the Holy Qur'an begins “in the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful”. It was the custom of the Holy Prophet^{sa} to begin every thing in the name of God.

6. “*Whosoever shall not hear the words of God which he shall speak in His name, God will require it of him*”, and it is added in Acts that “*he will be destroyed*”. It is historical fact that the champions of those who did not believe in him and listen to the words of God which he spoke in His name

“If this prophet had fabricated against Us some of the sayings, We would have seized him by the right hand and cut out his aorta, and not one of you could have withheld Us from him.” (69:45-46)

perished; all their false gods and stone idols were destroyed, and only One God came to be worshipped throughout Arabia. The wars of those times were in the nature of divine punishment. God says in the Holy Qur'an:

“Fight them, Allah will chastise them by your hand and bring them in disgrace and assist you against them.” (9:14)

7. The prophecy says: “*A false prophet shall die.*” That is, God will protect the true prophet, so nobody could kill him. Thus God says in the Holy Qur'an:

“*O Apostle: Deliver what has been revealed to you from your Lord, and if you do it not, you have not delivered His message; and Allah will protect you from the people.*” (5:68)

Again He says:

“If this prophet had fabricated against Us some of the sayings, We would have seized him by the right hand and cut out his aorta, and not one of you could have withheld Us from him.” (69:45-46)

Although he was many times in great danger, yet God protected him, no one could kill him, despite many attempts.

Thus we see that Muhammad^{sa} was the prophet foretold by Moses^{as} in this prophecy, nearly two thousand years before his appearance. There is no prophet beside him in whom the seven signs mentioned in the prophecy could be found.

The Prophet and 10,000 Saints

There is another prophecy contained in Deuteronomy 33:2, Moses^{as} said: “*The Lord came from Sinai and rose up from Seir unto them; He shined forth from Mount Paran, and in His right hand went a fiery Law for them.*”

In this verse, the prophets of Sinai and Seir were Moses^{as} and Jesus^{as} respectively. The third prophet who was to appear from Mount Paran is the Holy Prophet of Islam^{sa}, descendant of Ishmael^{as}, who dwelt in the wilderness of Paran (Gen. 21:20). If we

consider the various descriptions of the boundaries of Paran, we come to the conclusion that Mecca along with the whole of Hejaz is included in Paran. The Fatima Valley is a halting place between Mecca and

Medina. If you enquire there of the boys who sell flowers, “where do they get the flowers from?” they will reply “*Min Bariyyat-i-Faran*” i.e., “from the wilderness of Paran.”

Moreover, the prophecy contains a special sign which cannot be applied to any other than the Holy Prophet of Islam^{sa}. That is, his coming with ten thousand of saints, which coincides with the number of Muslims who took over Mecca with the Holy Prophet^{sa}, as mentioned in Bukhari's Book of Hadith.

I'd like to reproduce here the account of this number briefly from the Life of Mahomet by Emile Dermenghem (London 1930):

“In the month of Shawwal of the fifth year of the Hijra, the Allied (disbelievers) numbering ten thousand, marched against Medina, where there were but three thousand men to oppose them. Never before in the Hejaz had there been such a large army. Then there came upon them (one night while they were besieging Medina) violent and icy winds and one of those downpours of rain characteristic of the Arab winter. In a few minutes, the camp of the Allies was in complete disorder. Tents were uprooted, and blown to a considerable distance, fires were extinguished, pots were overturned, and the horses and camels scattered. Panic reigned. The nomads had no thought but of flying, so Abu Sufyan gave a command to retreat. Three years after the Battle of the Ditch, ten thousand Mussalmans left for Mecca by a circuitous road and pitched camp upon the surrounding heights. Mounted on Qoswa, his camel, at last, the prophet rode into his birthplace, proclaiming, 'Truth is come and error is gone' and all the idols were broken into pieces.”

The fiery law, too, refers to the commandments to fight away unbelievers. Thus it is that the prophet who was to come from Mount Paran with ten thousand saints was the Holy Prophet of Islam^{sa}. His companions were not unjust in their fighting. They fought against the heaviest odds and in defense of their right to believe; they were saints.

In connection with the ten thousand saints, I'd also like to refer to the Song of Songs in which Solomon has described in a romantic way his beloved; according to our view, the Holy Prophet of Islam^{sa}. He says:

“My beloved is whole and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand...His mouth is most sweet, yes, he is altogether lovely.” (5:10 & 16)

No student of history can deny the majesty and glory, steadfastness and bravery of the Prophet of Islam in carrying out his mission.

This is the color of the Prophet's^{sa} skin, as recorded in the traditions. The Hebrew of 'altogether lovely' is Mohammadiam, which signifies the name of his beloved. And I have already mentioned that Mohammad (peace and the blessings of God be upon him) was the chiefest among the ten thousand of his companions who entered Mecca.

Qualities of the Prophet

After Moses^{as}, we find David^{as} describing his countenance and some other qualities, on which I quote the following from Psalms 45:

1. Thou art fairer than the children of men.
2. Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty with the glory and thy majesty.
3. And in thy majesty, ride prosperously, because of truth and meekness and righteousness.

Christians assert that it is in Christ^{as} and in the mystical union between God and his church that this Psalm has its true fulfillment. But we Muslims say that the subject of the Psalm is the Holy Prophet of Islam^{sa}; as only he possesses the qualities mentioned in it.

Muslim historians are unanimous that the Holy Prophet of Islam^{sa} was the fairest in his countenance. Here I quote descriptions of his appearance by Christian writers:

Edward Gibbon writes in his *Decline and Fall*: "They applauded his commanding presence, his majestic aspects, his piercing eye, his gracious smile, his flowing beard, his countenance that painted every sensation of the soul, and his gestures that enforced each expression of the tongue."

Emile Dermengham writes:

"Mahomet was in the full vigor of his manhood, robust, of medium height, strong built, with broad chest and massive head; his hands and feet, although large, were fine and sensitive, his skin tanned....From under

the turban, his countenance beamed with a majestic radiance at the same time expressive and gentle. People felt that this inspired man was born to command and they obeyed him blindly."

No student of history can deny the majesty and glory, steadfastness and bravery of the Prophet of Islam^{sa} in carrying out his mission. Take for instance when he denounced their false gods. "The Kuraish, the guardians of the Kaaba, perceived, like the silversmiths at Ephesus that, if this went on, their position would be endangered, and their gains gone. Finding that bribes, threats, and entreaties were alike powerless to deter him, they expostulated kindly with his (Abu Talib's) nephew, 'Should they array against me the sun on my right hand, and the moon on my left,' said Mohammed, 'yet while God should command me, I would not renounce my purpose.' These are not the words, nor this the course, of an imposter," says R. Bosworth Smith in his book *Mohammad and Mohammadanism* (p. 119).

Consider this who had subjected him and his followers to the severest persecution, and sought to kill him, and then compare it with what Jesus answered to his brethren when he had given up walking with Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him, and his brethren asked him at the Jews' feast to go into Judea and show his work to his disciples and show himself to the world. He answered them:

"Go ye up unto the feast: I go not yet up unto this feast, for my time is not yet full come." But when his brethren were one up, then went he also up, unto the Feast, not openly, but as it were in secret." (John 7:1-10)

Likewise, when Peter said unto him that he was the Christ^{as}, he blessed him; but at the same time, he charged his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus^{as} the Christ. (Matt. 16:20)

Considering the anarchistic state of the Arabs, and their barbarity and cruelty, every sincere thinker must know that the Holy Prophet of Islam^{sa} was the object of this Psalm.

The Psalm further tells us that he will be known for his truthfulness, honesty, meekness and righteousness. The Holy Prophet of Islam^{sa} was commonly credited by his countrymen with these qualities.

Emile Derengham writes:

"They admired his character, moreover, and gave him the nickname of 'El-Amin', the Faithful, the Sincere, the Trustworthy." (*Life of Mahomet*, P 47)

Washington Irving writes, on authority of Abulfeda a Muslim historian:

"Allah had endowed him with every gift necessary to accomplish and adorn an honest man; he was so pure and sincere, so free from every thought, that he was commonly known by the name El-Amin, or the Faithful." (*Life of Mohammad*, P. 33)

"Once he hurried," writes Emile Derengham, "to the hill Safa, and gave the ancient war-cry of the Quraishites. When they assembled, he cried out 'If I told you that horsemen were in the valley ready to attack you, would you believe me?' 'Yes,' they answered, 'We have never heard you lie'." (Page 75)

He was meek throughout his life. Emile Dermengham has described him thus:

"Mohamet was neither vain, covetous, nor corrupted by ambition and fanaticism... He was most gentle, sensitive and humane... He was affable with everyone and very simple in his habits. He used to sweep his own bed-chamber, mend his clothes and sandals, milk the ewes, lie on his back on the floor of the Mosque, get up to let in a cat, look after sick cockerel, wipe the sweat from his horse with his sleeve, give alms to the poor whenever he had anything to give, avoid as much as possible anything that gave him the air of being a King. He had neither a Court nor Ministers, only advisors and several secretaries, and a Seal on a liver ring bearing these words: 'Mohammed, the Messenger of God.'" (*Life of Mahomet* pp. 165-166)

Therefore, it is absolutely clear that the Holy Prophet of Islam^{sa} was the true fulfillment of the Psalm under discussion. ♦

Part II will be presented in the next issue.

Farewell Address of the Holy Prophet of Islam

In the ninth year of Hijra (Exodus), the Prophet^{sa} went on a pilgrimage to Mecca. On the day of the Pilgrimage, he received the revelation containing the famed verse of the Qur'an which says:

“This day have I perfected your religion for you and completed My favor upon you and have chosen for you Islam as your religion” (5:4).

This verse said in effect that the Message which the Holy Prophet^{sa} had brought from God and which by word and deed he had been expounding all these years, had been completed. Every part of this Message was a blessing. The Message now completed embodied the highest blessings which man could receive from God. The Message is epitomized in the name ‘al-Islam’, which means submission. Submission was to be the religion of Muslims, the religion of mankind. The Holy Prophet^{sa} recited this verse in the valley of Muzdalifa, where the pilgrims had assembled. Returning from Muzdalifa, the Prophet^{sa} stopped at Mina. It was the eleventh day of the month of Dhul-Hijja. The Prophet^{sa} stood before a large gathering of Muslims and delivered an address, famed in history as the farewell address of the Prophet^{sa}. In the course of this address he said:

O men, lend me an attentive ear. For I know not whether I will stand before you again in this valley and address you as I address you now. Your lives and your possessions have been made immune by God to attacks by one another until the Day of Judgment. God has appointed for every one a share in the inheritance. No ‘will’ shall now be admitted which is prejudicial to the interests of a rightful heir. A child born in any house will be regarded as the child of the father in that house. Whoever contests the parentage of this child will be liable to punishment under the Law of Islam. Anyone who attributes his birth to some one else’s father, or falsely claims someone to be his master, God, His angels and the whole of mankind will curse him.

O men, you have some rights against your wives, but your wives also have some rights

against you. Your right against them is that they should live chaste lives, and not adopt ways which may bring disgrace to the husband in the sight of his people. If your wives do not live up to this, then you have the right to punish them. You can punish them after due inquiry has been made by a competent authority, and your right to punish has been established. Even so, punishment in such a case must not be very severe. But if your wives do no such thing, and their behavior is not such as would bring disgrace to their husbands, then your duty is to provide for them food and garments and shelter, according to your own standard of living. Remember you must always treat your wives well. God has charged you with the duty of looking after them. Woman is weak and cannot protect her own rights. When you married, God appointed you the trustees of those rights. You brought your wives to your homes under the Law of God. You must not, therefore, insult the trust which God has placed in your hands.

O men, you still have in your possession some prisoners of war. I advise you, therefore, to feed them and to clothe them in the same way and style as you feed and clothe yourselves. If they do anything wrong which you are unable to forgive, then pass them on to someone else. They are part of God’s creation. To give them pain or trouble can never be right.

O men, what I say to you, you must hear and remember. All Muslims are as brethren to one another. All of you are equal. All men, whatever nation or tribe they may belong to, and whatever station in life they may hold, are equal.

While he was saying this the Prophet^{sa} raised his hands and joined the fingers of the one hand with the fingers of the other and then said:

Even as the fingers of the two hands are equal, so are human beings equal to one another. No one has any right, any superiority to claim over another. You are as brothers.

Proceeding the Prophet^{sa} said:

Do you know what month this is? What territory we are in? What day of the year it is today?

The Muslims said in reply, they knew it was the sacred month, the sacred land and the day of the Hajj.

Then the Prophet^{sa} said:

Even as this month is sacred, this land inviolate, and this day holy, so has God made the lives, property and honor of every man sacred. To take any man’s life or his property, or attack his honor, is as unjust and wrong as to violate the sacredness of this day, this month, and this territory. What I command you today is not meant only for today. It is meant for all time. You are expected to remember it and to act upon it until you leave this world and go to the next to meet your Maker.

In conclusion, he said:

What I have said to you, you should communicate to the ends of the earth. Maybe those who have not heard me may benefit by it more than those who have heard. (Sihah Sitta, Tabari, Hisham and Khamis)

The Prophet’s^{sa} address is an epitome of the entire teaching and spirit of Islam. It shows how deep was the Prophet’s^{sa} concern for the welfare of man and the peace of the world; also how deep was his regard for the rights of women and other weak creatures.

The Prophet^{sa} knew his end was near. He had had hints from God about his death. Among the cares and anxieties to which he gave expression were his care and anxiety about the treatment women received at the hands of men. He took care that he should not pass away from this world to the next without assuring to women the status which was theirs by right. Since the birth of man, woman had been

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regarded as the slave and handmaid of man. This was the Prophet's^{sa} one care. His other care was for prisoners of war. They were wrongly looked on and treated as slaves and were subjected to cruelties and excesses of all kinds. The Prophet^{sa} felt he should not leave this world without assuring to prisoners of war the rights which were theirs in the sight of God. Inequality between man and man also oppressed the Prophet^{sa}.

Occasionally differences were stressed to a degree which could not be endured. Some men were raised to the skies and others were degraded to the depths. The conditions which made for this inequality were conditions which made for antagonism and war between nation and nation and country and country. The Prophet^{sa} thought of these difficulties also. Unless the spirit of inequality was killed and conditions which

induced one people to usurp the rights of another and to attack their lives and their possessions-unless these conditions which become rampant at times of moral decay were removed, the peace and progress of the world could not be assured.

He taught that human life and human possessions had the same sacredness which belonged to sacred days, sacred months and sacred places. No man ever showed such concern and such care for the welfare of women, the rights of the weak, and for peace between nations as did the Prophet^{sa} of Islam. No man ever did as much as the Prophet^{sa} to promote equality among mankind. No man pined as much as he for the good of man. No wonder, Islam has ever upheld the right of women to hold and to inherit property.

European nations did not conceive of this right until about one thousand three

hundred years after the advent of Islam. Every person who enters Islam becomes the equal of everyone else, no matter how low the society from which he comes. Freedom and equality are characteristic contributions of Islam to the culture of the world.

The conceptions which other religions hold of freedom and equality are far behind those which Islam has preached and practiced. In a Muslim mosque, a king, a religious leader and a common man have the same status; there is no difference between them. In the places of worship of other religions and other nations these differences exist to this day, although those religions and nations claim to have done more than Islam for freedom and equality. ♦

- Excerpt from *Introduction to Study of the Holy Qur'an*, pages 294-297.

From the Archives

Excerpt from Volume LII, 4th
Quarter 1985, No. 2

Book Review: *The World of Allah*, by David Douglas Duncan Houghton, Boston. 1982. Reviewed by Shakurah Nooriah

This engrossing volume introduces the non-Muslim to the stunning panorama of Islamic daily living through photographic essays and text, and interpretation of Duncan's view of the people in their world. An ex-Marine, he is a world-famous and highly respected former photographer for *Life* magazine. This handsome and expensive offering is based on the many years which he spent living among Muslims, both professionally and personally. For this issue, he has culled the best of all of his photographs made during many journeys in the lands of Allah: from Spain, Morocco, Jerusalem, Cairo and Palestine to Istanbul and Indonesia.

His subtly searching lens, lyric pen and sympathetic tone blend easily with the warmth of his special memories of life among the Faithful, forming a harmonious whole. The one regrettable omission is the lack of specific reference to Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi (peace be upon him) the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam at Qadian, India in 1889.

The centerpiece and major theme of *The World of Allah* lies deeply hidden among its 300 or so pages, juxtaposed between extraordinary glimpses of the serenity of the Alhambra and other compositions of Moorish Spain... the fabled Mosque of Isfahan... bargaining in bustling market towns... abandoned street waifs... the opulent splendor of royal palaces ... solitary shepherd boys on desolate desert terrain... stark, rock-strewn cemeteries... veiled beauties sequestered in cool mosque courtyards... military maneuvers on snowy Turkish plains... breath-taking views of Middle and Far Eastern fabled landscapes... and a multitude of methods of eking out a living from a difficult environment. As Duncan has it, "The roots and hallowed traditions of more than a thousand years strengthen and enfold all Believers whose



An Ahmadiyya Muslim Mosque in Tanzania, East Africa

Faith supports a world apart" and "For the nomad, every morning of all seasons fills life with a promise of future dreams."

This central theme is explored with sensitivity in Nigeria, Kenya and Uganda; the resolute heroes are those dedicated, self-sacrificing Ahmadi Muslim missionaries who are teaching and preaching the Message of the Holy Prophet (may the peace and blessings of God be upon him) in some of the most isolated places on earth. At Lagos, Duncan's lens catches the Muezzin's call, the mission news boy selling *Truth*, and teacher Hamzat Okunun and his students in class. His camera then focuses on an Ahmadi Muslim, Hakeem Mohammad Ibrahim, who travels "three thousand miles a year on his bicycle across mountains and jungles," armed only with his briefcase filled with pamphlets and books. The photographs from pages 178 to 185 are carefully explained in the text in the back of the book, on pages 273 through 276. As one studies the faces of these devout teachers and their follower-converts, one is struck by the modesty of these people in the face of their tremendous service to the cause of Islam. Nowhere else in this book does one sense the true meaning of Islam as in these few pages.

Maulana Hakeem Mohammed Ibrahim has the wonderful role of physician, teacher and Ahmadiyya missionary for all of the entire length and breadth of Uganda, which leaves him little time to practice medicine. He works alone, without the benefit of printing press or a central office and a

supporting missionary partner. His actual possessions are "his bicycle, books and literature and his faith." May Allah strengthen his hands.

He is deeply convinced that in the near future millions of Africans will seek spiritual and social solace in Islam and his present efforts will help them and the missionary who will someday take over his duties. He observes that there are several reasons why Islam appeals to Africans, rather than Christianity or paganism. First of all, Islam "welcomes and recognizes" the equality of each human being. Secondly, Islam is the one agency which promises peace and stability to Africa after its turbulent history of vigorous nationalist movements; the violence and moral insensibility of apartheid; the long and brutal years of humiliating colonialism; and the effects of the ideological conflicts between the two superpowers.

Many non-Muslims are familiar with the caricatured face and name of the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini but "...there are other voices in the world of Allah." In his passage through the Islamic community of East Africa, Duncan had the good fortune to encounter and become a friend of Maulana Sheikh Mubarak Ahmad, the director of all Ahmadiyya missions in East Africa for more than 27 years. They spent many hours engaged in wide-ranging and probing dialogue on the theme of universal Islam in the twentieth century. They maintain a cordial relationship today.

Maulana Mubarak Ahmad was subsequently appointed as Ameer and Missionary In-Charge of the Ahmadiyya Communities in the United Kingdom and, later, in the United States, where he presently resides with his family. His modest office in Nairobi housed only a desk and books and pamphlets, in its location behind the Ahmadi mosque. He accomplished the prodigious feat of translating the Holy Qur'an into Swahili (said to be the 10th language in usage in the world) while he was in charge of East African headquarters of the Movement. He began this exemplary task in 1936 and completed it in 1953 – over 1,100 pages, “the greatest job of translation ever attempted in East Africa, perhaps in all of Africa, regarding a single volume work.” The original Arabic is preserved in this translation, in all of its pristine purity.

The first Ahmadi missionary entered East Africa in 1934. Ten years later he was joined by a partner; today they number 13 Pakistani and 12 African missionaries. They are scattered all over that part of Africa and earn small salaries, being supported by subscription funds donated by local members. These funds also provide for the publication of Ahmadi literature in English, Arabic, Swahili, Luo and Luganga.

As Maulana Mubarak Ahmad says, “We are a very poor community... but we have zeal... we devote our lives to our assigned tasks... we go willingly.”

How do the missionaries go about accomplishing conversion to Islam in East Africa? Much instruction is given in the religion of Islam and the applicant must meet the requirements: circumcision; proper cleansing of hands and feet; successful completion of lessons and question-answer sessions based on the Holy Qur'an and the Traditions of the Holy Prophet^{sa}; understanding of the conditions of the *Bai'at* (Initiation) as taught by Ahmadis; signing of the conversion papers which are sent to be recorded at international headquarters at Rabwah, Pakistan; changing to a Muslim name; learning Prayers; and passing through the final ceremony of initiation which consists of proper cleansing (wudhu), and followed by more instructions.

Only the Ahmadiyya Movement is actively spreading Islam in East Africa. Sunni and Shiite sects resent and oppose Ahmadi teachings as not based on Holy Qur'an and thus un-Islamic. Maulana Ahmad responds that it is the Ahmadi understanding of Islam which keeps Islam alive in these times of



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chaotic change in social, political and economic institutions.

Duncan describes Maulana Mubarak Ahmad as “a quiet, intelligent, soft-spoken man who has thought about what he wants to say... a far cry from those wild-eyed Muslim fanatics who are out to convert or confront the world.” Maulana Ahmad carefully explained that it is his responsibility to “lay the foundation of understanding of Islam so that others, non-Muslims, will turn to the only universal faith for all men, regardless of color, country, place in life or community” of origin.

He answers criticisms of orthodox Muslims by forthrightly stating that “It is no sin to translate the Quran into other languages since Arabic is not universally understood. While they do not have the material wealth of other religious organizations, such as Christianity, organized Muslims can bring greater balance to the people of the world. It is the duty of Ahmadis to present to interested

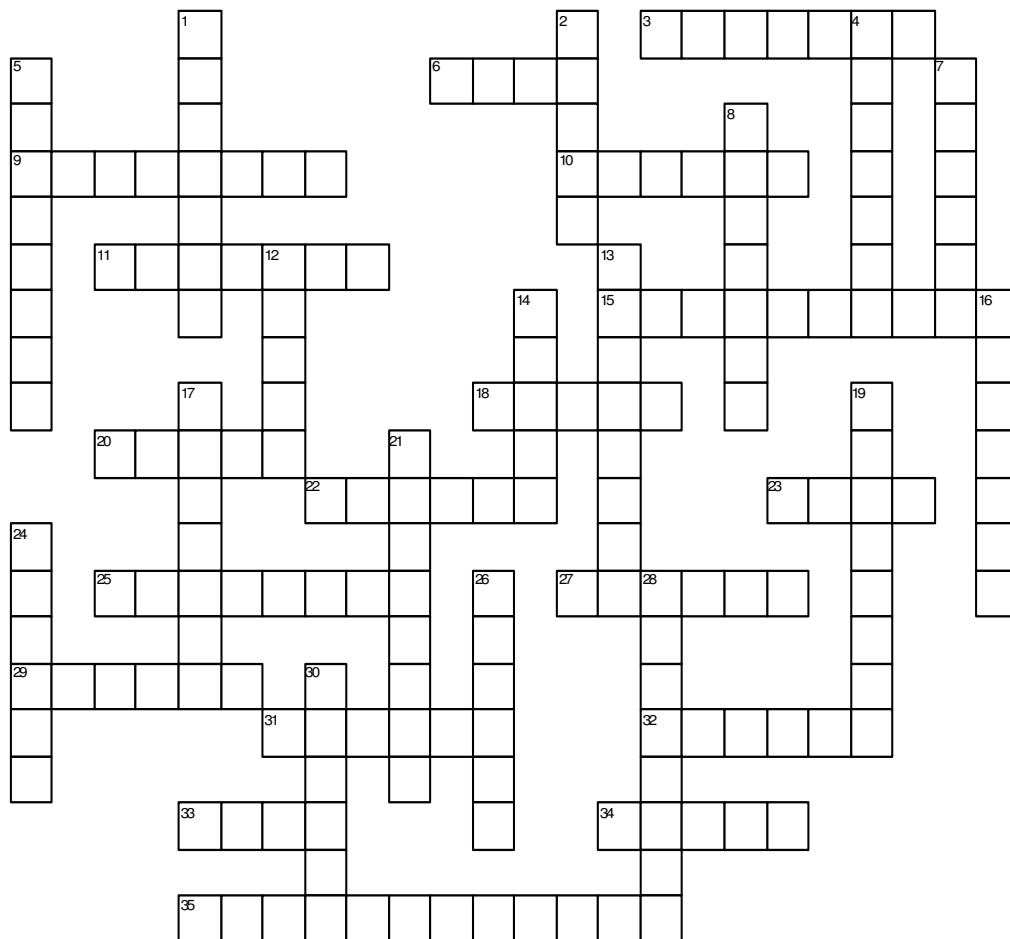
people an understanding of Islam, nothing more. “This can be accomplished by “printing long term literature like the Holy Quran and short term magazines, newspapers and pamphlets.”

His concluding words in the interview with David Douglas Duncan were, “Islam is the future religion in Africa. The ground is being prepared now for carrying on organized Muslim missionary work. Yes, the people will come!”

Duncan has provided the evidence that Ahmadis are the antithesis of the commonly held Western stereotype of Muslims as anarchic, irrational, sensual, and uneducated. Therefore, appreciation must be extended to him for setting forth, so clearly and sympathetically, the incessant toil, poverty, and the willing sacrifice of self and family which Ahmadi missionaries undergo to provide spiritual nurturing, medical and educational services to mankind, not only in Africa but in all areas of this world. ♦

Trivial Matters

Most answers can be found in the issue!



www.CrosswordWeaver.com

ACROSS

- 3** Most beloved companion (2 wds)
- 6** Site of Prophet's Last Sermon
- 9** 570, Year of the ____
- 10** Practice of Holy Prophet
- 11** Feared by chickens everywhere (2 wds)
- 15** 2 yr. college degree
- 18** Almsgiving
- 20** ____ for Mankind
- 22** Journalist, ____ Fisk
- 23** 624, Battle of ____
- 25** Ijtihad, use of ____
- 27** Sermon on the ____ Mount
- 29** Alaskan native (p.16)
- 31** Saying of Holy Prophet
- 32** Mother of Muhammad
- 33** Cave
- 34** Hajj-like
- 35** World of Allah Guide (2 wds)

DOWN

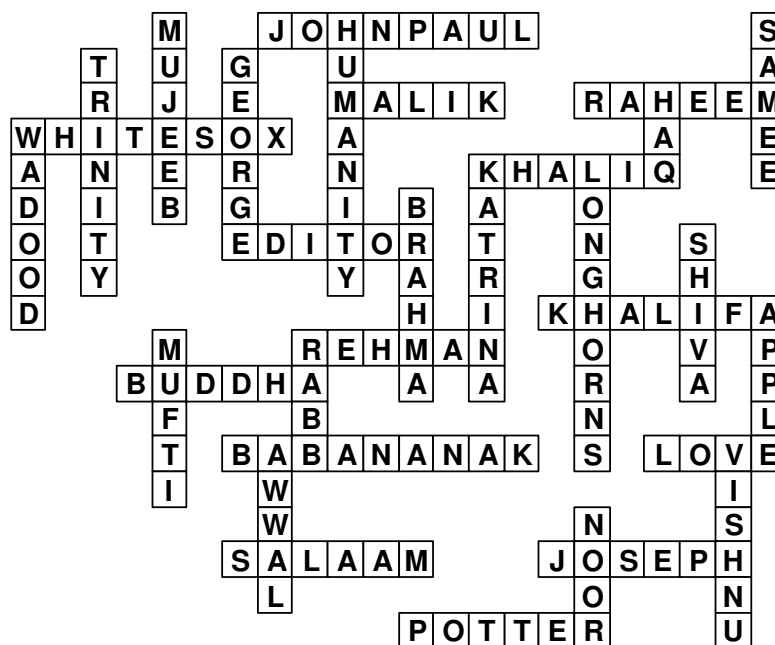
- 1** 1st book of Hadith
- 2** Gathering in Arabic
- 4** Holy Prophet's first wife
- 5** 2006 NFL Champs
- 7** ____ of Allegiance
- 8** ____ Controversy
- 12** Prophet's age at 1st revelation
- 13** Under mom's feet
- 14** Yusuf Lateef, Gentle ____
- 16** Prophet's wife of Jewish origin
- 17** ____ of speech
- 19** Father of Muhammad
- 21** Prophet's Uncle (2 wds)
- 24** Calcuttan mother
- 26** Medinite Jews, Banu ____
- 28** Seal of Prophets
- 30** World Baseball Classic, US 1st opp.

Solutions to Trivial Matters Vol. 86, Issue 1

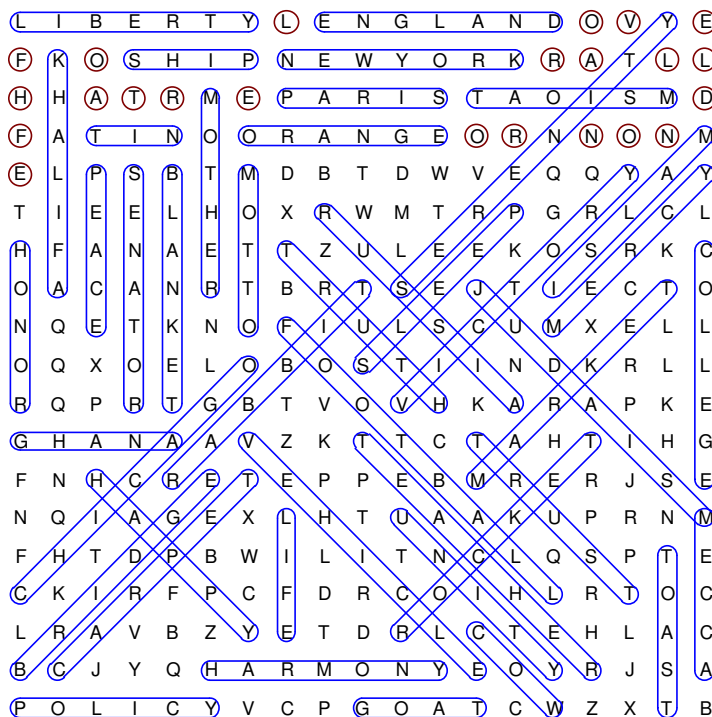
The prior issue's word match contained a Secret Message. Circle the remaining letters after finding every word from the top left of the square up until a hidden message becomes clear!

Crossword Puzzle

Hint - Find Answers Throughout Issue!



Word Match



Our Leader

By Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^{as}, Founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community
The English rendering of an Urdu poem written in praise of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa}



He is our leader, who is the source of all light;
His name is Muhammad^{sa}; he alone is my beloved.
All Prophets are holy, one better than the other;
But from the Almighty, he is the best of the creation.

He is far better than those before him, he is a darling in his qualities;
Every eye is focused on him, he is the full moon which dispels all darkness.
Those who came earlier, were fatigued halfway; He it is who brought us to the shore;
May I be a sacrifice; he alone is the guide.

He removed the screen, and showed the secret path;
He joined the hearts to the Beloved, such a friend he is!
That Friend, beyond all physical limitations, that Unseen Beloved;
We saw through him, so he is the true guide.

Today he is the King of faith; the Crown of the apostles;
He is pure and holy, this is his eulogy.
All commandments ordained by the True God were demonstrated in practice by him;
He revealed all secrets, an excellent gift is this.

His vision is far-reaching like a telescope, his heart is close to the Friend;
In his hands is the light of faith; he is the fountain of light.
He revealed the weighty secrets of faith;
He is the King who grants wealth.

I am a sacrifice at that light; I belong entirely to him;
He is all, what worth do I possess? This is the final verdict.
That Unique Beloved is the source of all learning;
All else is a mere tale, this is the truth unblemished.

We found everything through him, O Allah You are a witness;
He is that manifestor of Beauty, who showed us the Truth.

News, Views & Reviews

Muslim Sunrise writers have been actively engaged in responding to the American press on articles of religious importance. Some recent samples of their published responses concerning the recent cartoon controversy are below:

Dallas Morning News, *February 9, 2006*
Chicago Sun Times, *February 9, 2006*
USA Today, *February 9, 2006*
Houston Chronicle, *February 9, 2006*

“Cartoons Show Disregard, Newspapers Show Restraint”

Dear Editor:

I am a Texan Muslim and condemn the cartoon depictions of our Holy Prophet, Muhammad^{sa}. People of all religions should feel welcome and safe to practice their religion in the peaceful manner for which it was intended. For this, I am proud and would like to applaud the responsible and conscientious conduct upheld by our newspapers this side of the Atlantic. The media must balance its right to free speech with its duty to guard the religious sensitivities of all religions, and refrain from vulgarity which deliberately provokes others. To my Muslim brethren, I would hope that you too would take your responsibility and follow the legacy of our Prophet and return insults with forbearance and kindness.

Bilal A. Rana
Houston, TX

Letter to the Editor, *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, February 13, 2006

“Muhammad Cartoons: Protests offensive, as Quran rejects violence”

Dear Editor:

I write as a Muslim who came to America 15 years ago and received my college education here (“Cartoon focus misses big picture,” @issue, Feb .10).

The protesters of the cartoons have taken their reaction to extremes by burning flags and buildings and causing deaths. But as a civil society, America should hold itself to higher standards. It would be arrogance and ignorance to claim a right to blaspheme and offend.

The Quran rejects violent acts even in wartime, much less in peacetime protests. It also clearly bids Muslims not to blaspheme the leaders of any sect, cult, religion, etc., and holds all prophets of God in respect.

Qamar Ahmad
Duluth, Georgia

Letter to the Editor, *Kalamazoo Gazette*
(Michigan), February 14, 2006

Dear Editor,

Thank you for not hurting the sensibilities of millions of Muslims by reprinting the offensive and provocative cartoons in your paper. Thank you for using your freedom of speech in a responsible manner. While we as Muslims are deeply hurt, we are also embarrassed by the foolish reaction of some ignorant Muslims who had been incited by their violent religious leaders or mullahs. Their behavior is totally against the teachings of the Quran and the conduct of our beloved prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him.

Muslims around the world are burning flags, setting foreign embassies on fire and threatening more violence because they consider the printing of those cartoons blasphemy. This behavior is against the very definition of a Muslim. A Muslim is one who is at peace with him/herself and is at peace with all the creatures of the world. By definition, there should be no danger of any sort from a Muslim.

I'll mention one example of how Prophet Muhammad^{sa} behaved when Abdullah bin Obeye Bin Sulool blasphemed against Muhammad^{sa} during his lifetime. Muhammad's^{sa} companions became furious and offered to kill Bin Sulool, but Prophet Muhammad^{sa} forbade them. Then Bin Sulool's own son, who was a Muslim, came forward and sought permission to kill his father. He thought that the prophet probably

did not allow anyone else to kill him because he might be hurt. But Muhammad forbade Bin Sulool's son, also. One of his companions, Hazrat Omar came forward and reminded Prophet Muhammad^{sa} of the Quranic verse telling him, “O prophet of God, don't you know that Allah has said that He will not forgive Bin Sulool even if YOU seek forgiveness for him 72 times.” Prophet Muhammad said, “Omar, I'll seek forgiveness for him more than 72 times.” This was the noble character of the founder of Islam and his treatment of his enemies. He kept praying for his forgiveness. No violence can be attributed to him.

Thus, whereas on the one hand I request the free press to use its freedom responsibly, I also humbly urge my fellow Muslims to instead pray for those who hurt their sensibilities and work to conduct themselves in the true spirit of Islam and follow in the footsteps of its great founder, the prince of peace and educate your communities about his excellent character.

Ayesha Mangla
Portage, MI

Letter to the Editor, *Frederick News Post*
(Virginia), February 14, 2006

“Local Muslim comments on cartoon controversy”

As a Muslim, it is my responsibility to defend the honor of what is holy in Islam. As an American Muslim, I am not taken to burning embassies or flags of other countries; instead, I will exercise my freedom of speech on the recent cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him).

It would be naive to say that the cartoonist did not intend to insult Muslims while giving his view on terrorism. Was the cartoonist within his rights given the state of Muslim/Western relations and the results the cartoons would surely produce? It is an American who once told us freedom of speech does not mean you can shout “Fire!” in a crowded theatre. Why does this common sense not apply today?

According to Islam, the sanctity of creating or representing human life is meant only for God. In addition, artistic images of people are

forbidden because of the human tendency to worship these images.

More importantly, Muslims hold profound love for this gentle, wise, perfect and just Prophet because of the gift of his life's example.

Imagine, then, our feelings even to hear that someone has depicted Muhammad (peace be upon him) telling would-be bombers that heaven is all out of virgins. Adding to the injury, the cartoonist had displayed his own absolute ignorance of the Quranic teachings on martyrdom and Paradise.

It is an act of prejudice against billions of Muslims worldwide that has most unfortunately driven the gap between East and West even wider. And in this age of uncertainty, terrorism and war, that is a display of irresponsibility, not freedom of the press, on the part of the European newspapers.

Sincerely,
Ruqaiya Asad
Frederick, VA

Other Printed Responses:

Dr. Sohail Hussain, Letter to the Editor, *Yale Daily News*, February 14, 2006

Dr. Mahmood Qureshi, Letter to the Editor, *New London Daily* (Connecticut), February 14, 2006

Dr. Ahsan M. Khan, Letter to the Editor, *Orange County Register*, February 15, 2006

Saleem Qadir, Letter to the Editor, *Silicon Valley/San Jose Business Journal*, February 17, 2006

Sardar Anees Ahmad, Letter to the Editor, *Anchorage Press* (Alaska), February 17, 2006

Mehvish Mirza, Letter to the Editor, *Santa Clara Newspaper*, February 23, 2006
Editorial, *Broadside Online* (George Mason University newspaper), February 20, 2006

Luqman Tahir Mahmood, Editorial, *Broadside Online* (George Mason University newspaper), February 20, 2006



NEWS, VIEWS & REVIEWS

Danish Newspaper Cartoons

Editor's Note:

On September 30, 2005, Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten* published 12 cartoons depicting the Muslim Prophet Muhammad^{sa}. The pictures accompanied an editorial criticizing self-censorship after Danish writer Kare Bluitgen complained that he was unable to find an illustrator for his children's book about the Prophet^{sa}. Some of the cartoons – most notably one showing the Prophet^{sa} carrying a lit bomb on his head – were clearly intended to deliberately provoke Muslims.

The cartoons were republished in Austria, France, Germany, Italy and Spain. Diplomatic protests by governments of Islamic countries started in October 2005, escalating to the closure of embassies. Boycotts of Danish products and protests across the Islamic world built up in late January and early February. In the Palestinian territories, armed groups have made direct threats against citizens of the countries in which the cartoons were published. There have also been death threats against the artists. There have since been angry and sometimes violent protests across the Islamic world.

What follows is a brief reflection on the cartoon controversy prepared by the

Central Response Committee of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, USA.

The controversy surrounding the cartoon depiction of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) is an eye-opening example of our need to better understand Islam. It also underscores our need to be responsible in balancing our freedoms with the fragile sensitivities of the people of this great nation, and the world.

Freedom should never be taken as an excuse to exploit the sensitivity of others, especially in matters of faith. Those images of the Prophet^{sa} were insulting and forbidden in Islam. We believe this might not be widely known outside the Muslim world.

The media is a powerful weapon. It can be used to build harmonious relationships, be they interfaith, international, or interracial. Much in the same way, however, it can destroy them. We congratulate the American media taking a stand against "Islamophobia" – drawing a line between Muslims and terrorists who happen to identify themselves as Muslims. We are pleased to see our local media capitalizing on building a stronger and better world through education and responsible dissemination of information. We wish the same could be said for our European counterparts.

Although we can disguise our prejudice as "freedom of speech," responsible media challenges us to seek the facts in order to respect the sensitivities of all religions. These

principles have nourished our nation to be the superpower it is today. We live in a multi-religious society, and as world citizens, it behooves us to understand and respect our neighbors if we seek to live with them in peace and harmony.

We believe members of all faith-based communities should stand together and condemn this type of profanity in our midst. No Prophet of God should be depicted in such an insulting manner.

According to Muslims, there is only one acceptable designation of Muhammad, peace and blessings of God Almighty be upon him, which comes straight from the Holy Qur'an, "Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but he is the Messenger of Allah and the Seal of the Prophets..." (33:41). This one sentence esteems him to the level most deserving of review and honest resolution.

Although he is not the physical father of any men who perpetuated his lineage, he is the spiritual father of well over a billion people. He is included among other holy recipients of Divine revelation and stands alone as their seal, attesting to the truth of all Prophets who were sent to various nations at various times, in accordance with the needs of those peoples. Muslims revere him as the best example of the most noble attributes ranging from kindness and generosity to bravery and justice. We believe he brought the last and final law from God Almighty while being the threshold through which the Living God continues to communicate and guide. We state this so that those who put forth such assaults, be they in the form of misinformation campaigns or cartoon caricatures, should realize who they are insulting. It is far more than a man who lived 1,500 years ago – it is a group of 1.5 billion people who recognize and respect the Truth of all Prophets of all Faiths, peace be upon them all.

The Prophet's well-known response to verbal and physical assaults was patience and forbearance. Despite a bitter 13-year persecution including economic boycotts, murderous plots, intrigues and cruelty against the weak and helpless, he remained firm on non-violent reprisals. He endured rejection, oppression, death threats and eventual migration, as did other prophets. However, once war was declared against his community, it was his duty as their leader to protect them, and employ every moral stratagem to ensure victory. This included taking up the sword in battles, and attacking the enemy's caravan supply routes. When it was all said and



In the Palestinian territories, armed groups have made direct threats against citizens of the countries in which the cartoons were published.

done, the Prophet^{sa} victoriously returned to Mecca, his hometown, with 10,000 soldiers, many of whom were eagerly awaiting their opportunity to avenge their previous persecutions. To the surprise of the Meccans, however, the Prophet^{sa} had forgiven his most bitter enemies and granted a general amnesty.

Now is the time to revisit such forgiving platforms for all observing these recent incidents. Now is the time for conference, not confrontation; dialogue instead of debate; for engaging rather than enraging. The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community

recognizes the need for understanding and is prepared to support efforts towards tolerance and respect.

Again, we congratulate the American media for the responsible manner with which they have handled this hurtful incident. ♦

The response was prepared by Hasan Hakeem, Zion, IL on behalf of the Central Response Committee and first published in the February 2006 edition of the Waukegan News Sun, Lake County, Illinois.

Yusef Lateef: The Gentle Giant

Yusef Lateef and Herb Boyd,
*Gentle Giant: An Autobiography
of Yusef Lateef* (Morton Books,
Inc., January 2006)

**"Finding Beauty Through Music:
The Journey of Yusef Lateef"**
By Ata-ul-Malik Khan

Last fall, Yusef Lateef, Grammy Award-winning musician and member of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, released *Gentle Giant: An Autobiography of Yusef Lateef* (Morton Books, 2006). Working with Herb Boyd, his long time counterpart and the author of *We Shall Overcome: The History of the Civil Rights Movement*, the 84-year old Lateef lucidly depicts his journey from living in the culturally rich and socially poor streets of Detroit to landing at the forefront of musical popularity – an inspirational journey which deserves a close analysis.

Internationally, Lateef is a household name, as his tours spanned countries in Africa, Asia, and Europe. From August 1981 until August 1985, he worked as a senior research fellow at the Center for Nigerian Cultural Studies in Nigeria, extensively researching the Fulani flute.

Lateef formed his own entity, YAL Records, in 1992, with the aim of recording and distributing works of his own and those of other compelling artists. Fana Music, his publishing company, has released such books as *A Repository of Melodic Scales and Patterns* and *Yusef Lateef's Flute Book of the Blues*.

Lateef's gift to the musical world has been his ability to seamlessly blend sounds from a variety of reed instruments, including the tenor saxophone, flute, oboe, bamboo flute, shanai, shofar, argol, sarewa, and taiwan koto. His musical compositions are not only for his quartets and quintets, but also for symphony and chamber orchestras, as well as stage bands, vocalists, and solo pianists. In 1987, Lateef was awarded a Grammy for his recording, "Yusef Lateef's Little Symphony." ♦

Ata ul Malik Khan is a sophomore at Claremont McKenna College double majoring in History and Economics. He resides in Chino Hills, California.



Photo by Hasan Hakeem

Recently, Lateef was the subject of an article (reproduced below) written by the renowned Israeli musician, Assif Tsahar. The writer interviewed Lateef at his Amherst, Massachusetts home.

When musicians and jazz lovers talk about the giants who haven't received due recognition, one of the first names that always comes up is Yusef Lateef. But Lateef doesn't think of himself in that way. In fact, he is hardly willing to call himself a jazz musician. Luckily, we don't need his permission to see him as one of the jazz greats. So when I was offered

the chance to meet him before he left for a series of appearances in Europe, I didn't hesitate for a moment. I rented a car and drove to Amherst, Massachusetts, 300 kilometers from New York, where Lateef has been living and teaching for the past 30 years.

Yusef Lateef, 85, is one of the only musicians who see their art as a never-ending journey and quest. Throughout his career, he has been breaking down boundaries and forging new paths, and as such he has always intrigued me. Ever since I started out as a jazz musician, first as a guitarist and later on tenor saxophone, he has had a tremendous influence on me.

Lateef is a virtuoso who has acquired incredible skill on three main instruments:

tenor saxophone, of course - the sounds he makes from this instrument are my favorites; and flute and clarinet. Though he hasn't played the clarinet that much in recent years, I still think he's a superb clarinetist. In the 1950s, he was one of the first to bring world music to jazz and popular music, and played traditional instruments from all over the world, music that was full of magic and mystery and simultaneously very roots-connected. With that same unmistakable touch, he also wrote music for classical orchestras and composed integral works involving jazz ensembles, too. Like Miles Davis and John Coltrane, in his own way he creates music that is always innovative and that takes on surprising new forms.

I am 36 now and so I can appreciate Lateef's late blooming. He released his first records at age 36, after the death of Charlie Parker. I was surprised to learn that he and Parker were born the same year, 1920. "I was born in Chattanooga, Tennessee," Lateef told me, "and I grew up in Detroit, where my family moved when I was 5, in 1925. I started playing music at age 18, when I bought my first saxophone. I'd always wanted to play, but my parents didn't have the money to buy me an instrument. My father told me that if I came up with half the amount, he'd give me the other half. I worked selling newspapers and when I found an alto saxophone that cost 80 dollars I had enough money to pay half and my father gave me the rest. I started studying music in high school. I was in the same class with Milt Jackson [one of the all-time great vibraphone players - A. T.]. I remember that the teacher suggested that Milt play vibraphone. It was a time when the music scene in Detroit was thriving and there were a lot of leading musicians: The Jones Brothers, Tommy Flanagan, Barry Harris, Kenny Burrell.

"Lucky Thompson sat behind my wife in class. I remember that when Lucky didn't have money for a saxophone, he made holes in a broom and used that to practice on. He worked on buses until he got enough money to buy an instrument. He's the one who got me my first job in New York in 1943, with the Lucky Mander Orchestra, two weeks at the Apollo Theater in Harlem, and after I stayed in New York with the swing bands of Hot Lips Page and Roy Eldridge. In 1948, I joined Dizzy Gillespie's big band."

What's really beautiful and rare about Yusef Lateef's playing is that it contains the whole history of jazz, from swing to bebop to world music to modal and modern music, and despite all this stylistic variety, it always has a basic connection to the blues. Lateef's



Photo by Hasan Hakeem

I read that through prayer one can begin to experience God and direct one's personal tendencies into the right channels. I understood that you get respect for humanity and interpersonal contact based on honesty and acceptance. I learned to respect parents, the neighbor, the man in the street and the orphan. I liked it. The simplicity that God is one. I'd never understood about God being a trinity. And so I decided to choose this way and to convert to Islam. I started saying my prayers regularly and it also meant saying no to drugs and alcohol. And eating clean food. At that time, I saw a lot of people falling by the wayside from drugs and alcohol. My life became better. I appreciated life, and humanity. I'm happy with it, I don't know any better way. If I did, I would choose it.

sound is personal, warm and full and identifiable from the first note, and his methods of playing and writing are totally unique.

"My first influences were Herschel Evans, Lester Young, Coleman Hawkins, Don Bayes, Ben Webster. But eventually I understood that I had to find my own independent voice. This happened years ago and ever since I've been on a journey

of building my own way of expressing my ideas. I think that this is the tradition of this music. I call it 'auto-physopsychic' music. Which means that it's a music of the individual body, mind and soul. The idea is that the musician has to find his individual voice, and this is hard. It's a lot easier to imitate someone else. You put on a record and start to imitate their ideas, but it's not you.

Yusef Lateef was the first to introduce folk instruments from all over the world into jazz ensembles. He researched and used scales and melodies from many different cultures. The beauty and organic quality with which he combined them with jazz and blues, the tradition from which he emerged, are still extraordinary.



I discovered very early that this is what I need to do, to find my way to express myself, and this is what I'm trying to do."

These days it's hard to find independent voices like Yusef Lateef. Music today is full of imitations of imitations. The personal and individual voice has disappeared in the world of commercialism. Musicians today are busy fulfilling expectations and not searching for their own unique way to express themselves. It's fascinating to hear Yusef Lateef explain that this is in essence the tradition of jazz or "auto-physopsychic" music, as he calls it.

"You know," he says, "Duke Ellington once said that it's better to be 95 percent yourself than 100 percent someone else. I came to this understanding by looking inward. By recognizing that there's only one Lester Young. And that I can never be Lester Young. For example, just as each one of us has different fingerprints, we each must

have a different aesthetic. And use our own ideas and not those of others. If we want to present something meaningful in music, the goal is not imitation. The goal is creation.

"People who are different have to be brave and smart. First of all, when someone is so individual and different, the masses won't accept him. Nor will the establishment. When Stravinsky presented his 'Rite of Spring' for the first time, people left in the middle. He was brave and wrote something that came from within himself. He didn't imitate anybody. If he had written in the style of his time, people would have applauded and said how great he was. Take John Coltrane, for example. All through his life, he developed in different directions, and some of his fans left him because they didn't get it. But there were some who stayed with him and understood his creativity. Being different takes courage.

"It's not easy to develop your role. Outside, there are many influences and you love them. And if you follow them, it's easy for you to play that way because someone else created it for you. But then you're an imitator and not a creative artist. I think that's what John Coltrane understood. That he had to find his voice and go his own independent way."

"Yusef Lateef talks and I listen. I've read his recently published autobiography, 'The Gentle Giant,' and his presence in this face-to-face conversation has an intensity that's missing from the book. Reading something he wrote and hearing him speak are two utterly different things. It's like the difference between hearing a record and seeing the musician, in this case an incredible musician who has outlined his own unique path, a real artist when it counts. There are things that can only be experienced on a personal level.

"You know, Don Cherry [the legendary trumpeter who played with Ornette Coleman - A. T.] said that 'Style is the death of creativity'! You understand? The way that Charlie Parker played didn't have style. It was Charlie Parker. There was no such thing

I've read his recently published autobiography, "The Gentle Giant," and his presence in this face-to-face conversation has an intensity that's missing from the book. Reading something he wrote and hearing him speak are two utterly different things.

then, style. Now when we try to play like Charlie Parker, Charlie Parker-style, we're only making an effort, we're not creating anything. Death comes when we try to make style out of the music. 'Style is the death of creativity.' There's a lot of truth in that."



YUSEF LATEEF

PHOTOGRAPHED BY MICHAEL DI DONNA

He laughs. "Ever since commercialism and the publicity machine took over, they've been searching for labels to attach to everything. They have to give everything a name. But the name has no connection to what the artist creates. There's no connection to the creators of art. The merchants and the publicists call a certain kind of art 'pointillism' and then they try to sell

it. We're not selling, we're creating."

In 1948, Yusef Lateef converted to Islam and joined the Ahmadiyya sect, which was founded in the late 19th century in the Punjab in northern India and is considered heretical by Shiites and Sunnis.

The Ahmadiyya center in Israel is located in Haifa. As an Ahmadi, he makes use of Indian, Sufi and Western ideas.

“When I was in Chicago in 1948, I met a man who gave me writings on Islam and the Ahmadiyya movement. When I got back to New York I went to meetings with Abdullah ibn Buhaina [legendary drummer Art Blakey - A. T.] and saxophonist Sahib Shihab. They were already part of the movement and had converted to Islam.

“I read that through prayer one can begin to experience God and direct one’s personal tendencies into the right channels. I understood that you get respect for humanity and interpersonal contact based on honesty and acceptance. I learned to respect parents, the neighbor, the man in the street and the orphan. I liked it. The simplicity that God is one. I’d never understood about God being a trinity. And so I decided to choose this way and to convert to Islam. I started saying my prayers regularly and it also meant saying no to drugs and alcohol. And eating clean food. At that time, I saw a lot of people falling by the wayside from drugs and alcohol. My life

“The Qur'an says, ‘I am not pleased by your name, I am pleased by your deeds,’ so the only thing from which a man derives honor are his deeds. The name serves nothing but itself. My name is Yusef after the prophet Yusef Abdul Lateef - ‘servant of the gentle and kind.’

became better. I appreciated life, and humanity. I’m happy with it, I don’t know any better way. If I did, I would choose it.”

And he laughs again. Yusef Lateef’s original name was William Emanuel Huddleston. Since I, too, have changed my name, I know that a name always has significance, and so I was interested to know the meaning of Yusef Lateef’s name.

“The Qur'an says, ‘I am not pleased by your name, I am pleased by your deeds,’ so the only thing from which a man derives honor are his deeds. The name serves nothing but itself. My name is Yusef after the prophet Yusef Abdul Lateef - ‘servant of the gentle and kind.’ It means that I have to be gentle and kind. So it gave me a goal to achieve. And it’s my way now, how I relate to people around me, to my family. I aspire to be ‘lateef’.”

Yusef Lateef was the first to introduce

folk instruments from all over the world into jazz ensembles. He researched and used scales and melodies from many different cultures. The beauty and organic quality with which he combined them with jazz and blues, the tradition from which he emerged, are still extraordinary. I always thought this musical path was related to his conversion to Islam. I was surprised to learn that it didn’t happen that way.

“Let me tell you the truth about how it happened. After I finished recording my first record in 1956, for Savoy Records, I said to myself that if I’m going to keep on making records, I have to strengthen my music and enrich it. I can’t record the same music again and again. I told myself that I ought to go and learn the music of other cultures. So I went to the library and started learning from other cultures - ragas, scales, everything. At the time, I was working in a car factory - Chrysler - where I met a man from Syria. He asked me if I knew the rabat, a Syrian one-string instrument, and he told me he would make me one. With the rabat I recorded ‘Morning.’ And in a shuk, in an Oriental spice market, I found the orghul, an Arabian double-reed instrument. So I taught myself

how to play it. And that’s how I searched for different types of instruments and also started learning clarinet and Indian flute. At the time, I was playing on weekends and earning \$8 a night.

“But it wasn’t enough to support a family with three children, so I worked at Chrysler during the week. Until 1955, when I found a regular, six-night-a-week gig and left my day job. That’s also when I first heard Stockhausen’s woodwind quintet and his theories on how diatonic intervals like the minor third and the major third affect the music. I wanted to go to Germany to study with him, but I didn’t have the money. Then I studied with a student of his in Boston. And thus the development of the music sent me on a quest in the music of all cultures.”

Yusef Lateef has written about 20 books on music. Once, a single copy of one of

them (“Repository of Scales and Melodic Patterns”) found its way to Israel. I remember how we used to reverently pass this lone copy around and tried to extract something from the wealth of ideas in it that would further our own musical development. But this book, too, was more about the creative inspiration it provided than about how or what to play. It was a tool to use in finding your own individual way. In 1961, he joined the Cannonball Adderley group, which was one of the most successful jazz ensembles at the time (and also included Joe Zawinul, who later founded Weather Report). “I got the offer to join Cannonball at the same time that I got an offer to join Count Basie’s orchestra, and then I was also offered a chance to join Thelonius Monk’s quintet because Charlie Rose was sick. But my agent was Cannonball’s agent, too, so I went with him. I’ve often thought that it could have been interesting playing with Monk. In 1964 I left Cannonball and went to study at the Manhattan School of Music.”

And thus, at age 44, at the height of his career, Yusef Lateef decided, almost casually, to start anew as a student. I tried to explain to him that this is not a decision most people would make. He laughed. “Islam says ‘Seek knowledge from cradle to grave.’ I was seeking knowledge and I’m still seeking. Life is a phenomenal thing. To experience life there are so many things to understand. Just to be alive. Life is a wonderful thing that should be appreciated and devoted to joy, learning and helping others. I am very grateful to be here.”

Yusef Lateef continued his studies until he received his doctorate, and since 1975 he has been a professor at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst. In 1981, at age 61, he was invited to spend four years in Nigeria studying the local music, and there he both studied and taught in a local music school. His journey of learning has never ended. In 1990, at age 70, he launched an independent record label, won a Grammy and composed some of his most spellbinding works, including a piece for classical orchestra. He also began collaborating with percussionist Adam Rudolph. In recent years, he has been working with the French brothers Lionel and Stephane Belmondo, with whom he recorded the beautiful double CD “Influence” last year.

Lateef is coming to Israel with the Belmondo Brothers. Their first performance here will be on Saturday at the Enav Center in Tel Aviv, and later they will also perform at the Goldstar Zappa Club in the city.

It's hard to believe that this man is 85. He sounds like a teenager. His playing is powerful and bursting with ideas. His horizons are infinite. I feel like I'm sitting with the person who is actually living all that I once listened to with awe long ago at Korus Jazz. I have to ask him about his friendship with John Coltrane.

"I was very close to Coltrane. He was a man of action, not words. I remember

visiting him on 103rd Street. I went up the steps and I heard him practicing. I rang the bell. He stopped, opened the door, asked me to take a seat and went back to playing. After 15 or 20 minutes, I signaled to him that I was going to leave. He walked me to the door and after I left, I heard him practicing again. When I got home, I understood that I needed to practice." He laughs that laugh of his again.

"With the practice regimen he developed, it's no wonder he played like he did. He invested so much thought and effort in what he did. He was multifaceted. He put everything that he heard into his music. He took from all over and put it all together in a

bowl, and then he took it all out as one connected thing. Two weeks before he died, he came to visit me. I made him some hot chocolate. No one knew that he was sick, but I think he knew that he was going to die. I flew to England to play at Ronnie Scott's club and there I heard that he'd died. I miss him. Every time we met, he would ask, 'What are you doing now?' and I'd ask 'What are you doing now?' He was always searching."

On my way back to New York, it occurred to me that Yusef Lateef was the teacher I had never had, and was always looking for. But when I got home, I knew what I had to do: practice! ♦

MAHATMA GANDHI, speaking on the character of Muhammad^{sa}, says in *Young India*:

"I wanted to know the best of one who holds today's undisputed sway over the hearts of millions of mankind....I became more than convinced that it was not the sword that won a place for Islam in those days in the scheme of life. It was the rigid simplicity, the utter self-effacement of the Prophet, the scrupulous regard for his pledges, his intense devotion to his friends and followers, his intrepidity, his fearlessness, his absolute trust in God and in his own mission. These and not the sword carried everything before them and surmounted every obstacle. When I closed the 2nd volume (of the Prophet's biography), I was sorry there was not more for me to read of the great life."

K. S. RAMAKRISHNA RAO, an Indian Professor of Philosophy, says in his booklet, *Muhammad, The Prophet of Islam*:

"Perfect model for human life." Prof. Ramakrishna Rao explains his point by saying, "The personality of Muhammad, it is most difficult to get into the whole truth of it. Only a glimpse of it I can catch. What a dramatic succession of picturesque scenes! There is Muhammad, the Prophet. There is Muhammad, the Warrior; Muhammad, the Businessman; Muhammad, the Statesman; Muhammad, the Orator; Muhammad, the Reformer; Muhammad, the Refuge of Orphans; Muhammad, the Protector of Slaves; Muhammad, the Emancipator of Women; Muhammad, the Judge; Muhammad, the Saint. All in all these magnificent roles, in all these departments of human activities, he is alike a hero."

The Muslim Sunrise Q&A

1 Who were Muhammad's^{sa} parents?

The Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa} was born to Abdullah and Aminah. Prophet Muhammad^{sa} was born in 570 A.D. in the Hashimite branch of the tribe of Quraish. Shortly after Abdullah's marriage to Aminah, he went to Yathrib (modern day Medina) in pursuit of trade. He died there a few months prior to the birth of Muhammad^{sa}. Six years later, when young Muhammad^{sa} was returning to Mecca from Yathrib with his mother, she also fell ill and died.

Thus, the Prophet^{sa} was orphaned at the tender age of six. His grandfather and uncle then raised him in succession. It is no wonder that the Holy Prophet of Islam, throughout his life, emphasized the importance of caring for orphans. We find many citations in the Holy Quran and Hadith calling for the protection of orphans' rights, conveying that their dutiful care leads to paradise.

2 Why is the drawing of portraits forbidden in Islam?

There is a misconception that picture-taking in general is forbidden in Islam but this is not accurate. It is only the portrait drawn for the purpose of worshipping its subject that is forbidden. The Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa} understood that prophets who came before him had been deified by misguided followers. Their portraits were worshipped as gods. As a precautionary measure, he forbade the drawing of his own portraits as the burning love of his own followers may later lead them to worship him (God forbid). Historical accounts show that Jesus^{as} and his mother Mary were deified by some of their followers. The wisdom in Prophet Muhammad's ban then becomes clear.

3 What are Prophet Muhammad's^{sa} greatest accomplishments?

First, the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa} firmly and emphatically established the unity and worship of God, for all time. Second, the Messenger of Allah brought to mankind the Qur'an, which is the final and most perfect Divine scripture. These are without doubt the two greatest accomplishments of the Prophet of Islam. Moreover, his entire life was a wondrous achievement. He was the Seal of the Prophets and the Emperor of Arabia. Today more than one billion people look to his every action as a guide to live their own lives.

4 What religions are practiced in China?

The principal faith traditions in China are Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism. The People's Republic of China is officially secular and atheist, however, so exact figures or even approximations of the number of followers of these religions is difficult to obtain. Confucianism is named after the prophet Confucius^{as}, whose true name was Ch'iu K'ung^{as} and lived from 551-479 BC. He was known to his followers as K'ung-fu-tse (K'ung the Philosopher). This was changed in the West to Confucius^{as}. Taoism, pronounced *dowism*, is derived from the word Tao, which means The Way. Little is known about its founder, Lao-tze^{as} (Old Philosopher), other than he was a contemporary of Confucius^{as}, about fifty years his senior (604-524 BC). Buddhism is named after Buddha^{as}, whose proper name was Siddharta Gautama^{as} and lived from 560-480 BC.

5 Does the food we eat affect us spiritually?

Yes. We read, "According to the Holy Quran, the physical state of man has a very strong relationship with his moral and spiritual states, so much so that even a person's manner of eating and drinking affects his moral and spiritual states.

For instance, careful observation would disclose that people who refrain altogether from eating meat gradually suffer a decline of the faculty of bravery; they lose courage and thus suffer the loss of a divinely bestowed praiseworthy faculty. This is

reinforced by the evidence of the divine law of nature that the herbivorous animals do not possess the same degree of courage as do carnivorous ones. The same applies to birds. Thus there is no doubt that morals are affected by food. Conversely those who are given to a diet consisting mainly of meat and eat very little of greens suffer a decline of meekness and humility. Those who adopt the middle course develop both types of moral qualities. That is why God Almighty has said in the Holy Quran: Eat and drink but do not be immoderate (7:32); that is to say, eat meat and other foods but do not eat anything to excess, lest your moral state be adversely affected and your health might suffer" (Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^{as}).

6 Why can't Muslims eat pork?

Pork is forbidden in the Holy Quran on the grounds that its meat is unclean. The Law of Moses^{as} also forbade consumption of pork, which is clearly noted in the Holy Bible. Furthermore, there is no proof whatsoever that Jesus Christ^{as} ever ate pork. Muslims are allowed to eat pork, however, in life or death circumstances, as we read in the Holy Quran: He has made unlawful to you only that which dies of itself, and blood and the flesh of swine, and that on which the name of any other than Allah has been invoked. But he who is driven by necessity, being neither disobedient nor exceeding the limit, it shall be no sin for him. Surely, Allah is most Forgiving, Merciful (2:174).

Do you have a question on Islam? On religion? On God?

Email us your questions today, to: Muslim_Sunrise@yahoo.com

Khalifatul-Masih on the Cartoon Controversy

The Head of the worldwide Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, recently delivered a series of sermons from February 10, 2006 to March 10, 2006 from London in response to the cartoon controversy. These sermons were broadcast to the world via the global Muslim Television Ahmadiyya (MTA) Satellite1 and have critiqued reactions of both the Muslim world and the West. The sermons also highlight the role of the Promised Messiah, Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^{as}, as the greatest defender of Islam and of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa} in this age. They further answer a baseless allegation against the Ahmadiyya Community, and convey the tolerant teachings of the Prophet of Islam, Hadhrat Muhammad^{sa} and the true Islamic reaction to such events.

Notes:

The Muslim Sunrise has prepared this brief report using select extracts from the published summaries of these sermons. These summaries are prepared by the MTA Team and are not the exact verbiage of the sermons. To hear the word-for-word English translation of these sermons, visit www.alislam.org/archives/2006. While Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad's official title is Khalifatul-Masih or Successor of the Promised Messiah, he is affectionately referred to as Huzoor, meaning His Holiness.

Honor of the Holy Prophet^{sa}
February 10, 2006

Reaction of the Muslim World

The entire Muslim world was angered by the extremely depraved cartoon depiction of the Holy Founder of Islam. The sentiments to these publications were most natural, more so for Ahmadi Muslims, who, by means of the Promised Messiah^{as}, have a deeper understanding of the lofty station of the Holy Prophet^{sa} than do the Muslims who have yet to accept the Messiah. However, be it known unequivocally that strike and sabotage is not the way for true Muslims to express their feelings. The



Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad
Khalifatul Masih V

worldwide Ahmadiyya Muslim Community strongly rejects violence and terrorism in any form and for any reason.

A Divided West

Those in the West who defend the cartoons as 'free speech' have an apathetic stance towards religion and have lost all sense of sanctity for it. On the other hand, journalists like Robert Fisk have written that this is indeed not a matter of freedom of speech. Rather, Fisk expresses, for Muslims, the Prophet^{sa} received divine words directly from God and Muslims live their religion whereas 'we' do not; and while the Muslims have kept their faith alive 'we' have lost ours. In comparison, Fisk quoted the angry reaction to a film 'Last Temptation of Christ' some years ago and said that how could we expect the Muslims to remain silent at these crude cartoons.

It is unfortunate that the inappropriate reaction of certain Muslim 'leaders' gives the West the chance to take political advantages; in this case, the cartoons that found staunch support from the West were clearly an unprovoked attack on Islam, but the violent reaction of some Muslims ended up making them look like the intimidators.

The Danish Apology

Huzoor and the Ahmadiyya Community are concerned for the Danish people, who feel threatened by the condemnation of their

national flag. They wish for their apology to be accepted and the government has recently unveiled plans to build a large mosque in Copenhagen to compensate for the hurt caused to Muslims. Though the majority of the Muslim world is ready to accept their apology, a handful of Muslim 'leaders' are taking a negative stance on reconciliation, which is improper. It is time to accept the apology and work together to re-establish social harmony.

Muslims Beware

It is not far-fetched to say that mischief such as this will continue on, its objective being to torment Muslims, incite them to violence and subsequently vilify them and/or restrain their movement in the West. As such, the Muslim response must be in line with the values of Islam.

Defense of Holy Prophet^{sa}

The proper way to defend the honor of the Holy Prophet^{sa} can be seen from the numerous examples from the life of the Promised Messiah^{as} and his successors. Abdullah Athim, an aggressive Christian Missionary in India, had used extremely offensive language against the Holy Prophet^{sa}, calling him 'Dajjal' (a deceiver, an Anti-Christ). During a public debate with Abdullah Athim that lasted fifteen days, the Promised Messiah^{as} continually prayed privately, and after the debate was over, he told Abdullah Athim that the matter was not finished yet, that the Living God would determine who was the false party among them and if that party did not repent within 15 months, they would be punished by being thrown in 'Hawiya' (the nethermost hell). Abdullah Athim was frightened upon hearing this prophecy and immediately expressed his remorse and did not say any word against Islam and its Prophet^{sa}.

Another person in the time of the Promised Messiah^{as} was a Hindu named Lekhram who had insulted the Holy Prophet^{sa} repeatedly and had used foul language against him. The Promised Messiah^{as} prayed and announced that the enemy of God and His Prophet^{sa} would die a pathetic death within six years of the prophecy; that is exactly the way it came to pass. In the era of Khalifatul Masih II (1914-1965), some offensive books defaming the Holy Prophet^{sa} were written and the Muslims took to violence in reaction. He advised them that according to the teachings of the Holy Prophet^{sa} the brave ones are not who start fighting, but the truly

To be offensive about holy persons does not constitute freedom of speech. It is playing with the emotions of others while seeming to be championing freedom of speech – certainly every facet in life has a code of conduct and these cartoons exceed all limits. If this is denoted as freedom, it is the kind that leads to decline rather than advancement.

courageous ones are who have strong determination, and once they make a decision they do not draw back from it. The Muslims should adopt the fear of Allah in their hearts, should propagate Islam among others, and their leaders should try to uplift them socially and financially attaining financial and cultural freedom.

In the time of Khalifatul Masih IV (1982-2003) the incident of Salman Rushdi's offensive book took place, and the proper response was advised by him. Similarly, last year an article appeared in the press attacking the private family life of the Holy Prophet^{sa} and Huzoor responded to that with four months of sermons on the Prophet of Islam².

The Right Reaction

Earnest dialogue is the way for all the Ahmadis to express their protest. We do not believe in strikes, burning down building and flags. Ahmadi Muslims are writing articles and letters to the media. Most importantly, Ahmadis strive to imbue among themselves the beautiful character-traits of the Holy Prophet^{saw}. Our objective cannot be achieved by destructive methods. All Ahmadis, living in all places, should ask other Muslims to join in with them. Allah sent the Holy Prophet^{sa} as 'Rahmatul-lil Alameen' (mercy for all mankind). We should demonstrate his benevolence and love and mercy for others and for this, Muslims have to bring a change in their attitudes. Huzoor gave details of the immediate constructive and civilized response of our missionaries and Ahmadis in Denmark, where the cartoon had first appeared in a newspaper and told of their effective efforts.

Truth of the Promised Messiah^{as} February 17, 2006

Free Speech Responsibility

To be offensive about holy persons does not constitute freedom of speech. It is playing with the emotions of others while seeming to be championing freedom of speech – certainly every facet every facet in life has a code of conduct and these cartoons exceed all limits. If this is denoted as freedom, it is the kind that leads to decline rather than advancement.

Violence in the Name of Religion

There are hadith that relate the Messiah will abolish religious battles and will champion spreading God's religion through Signs. With reference to Quranic verse, Huzoor expounded that indeed the despairing situation of the present-day conflicts and wars in the Muslim world are a sign that war in the name of religion is not valid anymore and that now Jihad has to be with arguments and reasoning; Either the ones fighting wars are not true believers or it is time to give up fighting in the name of religion, the fact is both of these observations are applicable today.

Defending the Holy Prophet^{sa} February 24, 2006

A Step in the Right Direction

Huzoor began this Friday Sermon by citing verse 57 of Surah Al-Ahzab (33:57) and said that he would continue with the subject he has been giving a discourse on for the past few weeks. Speaking of some European countries and their media's current ploy at hurting the feelings of Muslims in the name of freedom of speech, Huzoor praised the response of the

Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC). The OIC has maintained that these countries will be pressured to apologize and to legislate against offending prophets of God in the name of freedom of speech and that if they did not abstain from this then there could be no guarantee for world peace. Huzoor prayed that may they be enabled to actually make decisions like this for world peace.

Muslims Killing Muslims

Huzoor commented on the situations in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh where Muslim is killing Muslim at the provocation of their leaders. Enemies of Islam take advantage of such situations. Muslims are faced with this blight because they have accused the Messiah of falsehood and in doing so have been disobedient to the Holy Prophet^{sa}. This situation saddens the Ahmadis and they should pray that may the rest of the Muslims not bring Islam in disrepute by being instrumental to the enemy. Without doubt the majority of Muslims follow their erroneous leaders in these heinous acts of violence due to their own lack of knowledge.

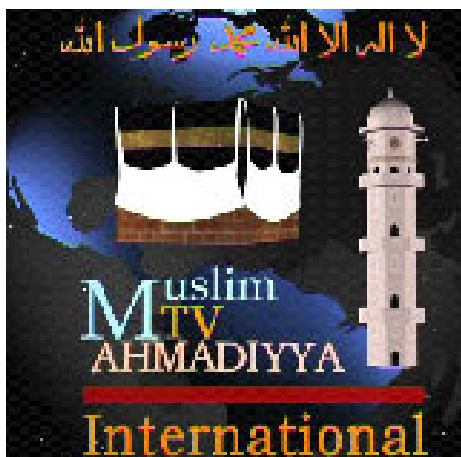
Tolerant Teachings of Islam March 10, 2006

Answering Objections to Islam

The non-Muslim objection is that the Holy Prophet^{sa} – God forbid – brought a religion that offers nothing but harshness and killing and that there is no concept of religious tolerance and freedom in Islam and that it is this teaching that has become a part of the Muslim psyche.

Huzoor said he has mentioned many times before that it is unfortunate that the actions of certain sections of Muslims, who work outside the Islamic code of conduct, have assisted the world to put across distasteful and offensive material about our beloved master^{sa}.

On the contrary, Islamic teachings, as expounded by the Holy Qur'an, repeatedly mention the rights of non-Muslims, justice and freedom in matters of religion etc. The Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa} was compassion personified in all aspects of his life and set great examples of freedom of conscience and displayed the greatest of compassion in triumph at the victory of Mecca giving total freedom of religion and thus fulfilling the Quranic injunction of "there should be no compulsion in religion" (2:257). ♦



MTA International emerged in 1994 with the aim of providing a positive alternative in the broadcasting world.

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The Muslim Sunrise Interview

Archbishop Jacob J. Agepog

The *Muslim Sunrise* interviews noteworthy personalities from the U.S. and abroad, to learn about their background, beliefs and contribution to society.

In this issue, we sat with Archbishop Jacob J. Agepog. Dr. Agepog was born in 1941 in Hyderabad, India. He started preaching at the young age of 17, and was ordained as Preacher in 1976. He is the President of Agape Indian International Ministries, Inc., and an Executive member of the World Bishops Council, New York. He has served as the President of Asian American Churches in Methodist Church, Northern Illinois Conference. He came to the US in 1987, studied at Trinity University in Deerfield, Illinois. He was ordained as Bishop in 2002 by the World Bishops Council, New York, and elected as Archbishop on September 24, 2004.

Archbishop Agepog, what do you feel are the common points between Islam and Christianity — the world's two principal religions?

The respect and love for Jesus^{as} is common among us. We believe Jesus^{as} is the Son of God, and Muslims believe he is a Prophet of God.

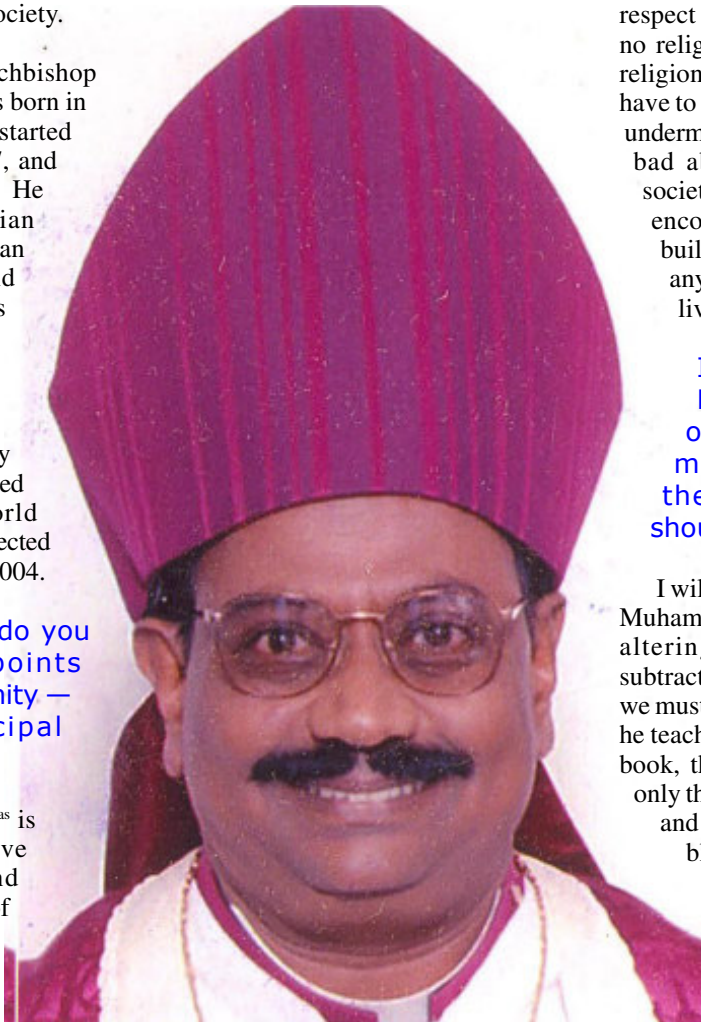
What about the concept of God Almighty? Do you believe that is the same, or do we have differences?

The Bible says: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. He is a Triune God. We cannot separate them. They are inseparable! That's what I believe in.

How can Muslims and Christians work together in noble and worthwhile endeavors?

There is ample room for working together. When we go by the truth, the Bible says the truth shall set you free. So, the truth cannot

be altered. We have to do those things that are lovely, just and honorable. Then, everyone will cooperate with us, because



we do not want to harm anyone! We want to bless everyone. In other words, we want to help everyone. The Bible says: "If ye have done to the least of my brethren, ye have done it to me!" That's what Jesus^{as} said. So, we have to take care of the least people. That means the downtrodden who usually are not cared for. We have to take care of those who have nothing to give in return, but they will be able to pray to God for those who helped them in difficult situations.

What are your feelings about the current controversy regarding the

offensive cartoons of the Prophet of Islam^{sa}?

My personal beliefs are that we should respect everyone, every religion, because no religion teaches us bad things. Every religion teaches us good things. So, we do have to respect all religions. We should not undermine any religion. We should not talk bad about any religion. We are in a society; so, we have to help each other, encourage each other and we have to build up each other, and never criticize anyone, any religion, so that we can live peacefully and happily.

If you had to present the Prophet of Islam^{sa} to your own congregation, what information would you provide them? What is it that they should know about him?

I will tell them to read about the Prophet Muhammad^{sa}. Whatever he says, without altering anything, without adding or subtracting anything out of his teachings; we must find the truth and reality. Whatever he teaches and whatever the Islamic sacred book, the Quran says, we should present only that. When we are true to our religion and true to ourselves, then we will be blessed by everybody!

As a religious leader of Christians, a very important and respectable post, should I assume that you have read the life of Prophet Muhammad^{sa}?

I have read it, but not in so much detail.

As a Christian leader, spiritually speaking, what challenges do you feel are in your way to bring the people to God? What are the main difficulties?

We cannot expect to see the results of our work at the spur of the moment. It takes time. So, we have to educate them in the right way of life. We need to first understand

their problems. Where there is no understanding, difficulties arise. We need to understand each other, try to be helpful and never hurt each other.

What are the major moral problems you see in American society that need to be corrected?

People do not believe in, and are not doing what the Ten Commandments tell us to do in the Bible. We come short of God's Glory.

May I ask, what are, let's say, three major conditions of sinfulness in this society that worry you?

The first one is insincerity: Whoever one may be, a Muslim or a Christian, one must be truthful; true to one's Holy Book. The other is respecting the elders; that has gone away. We need to bring that back. Once we respect our elders, we will be the recipients of the blessings of the elders. There is no love, genuine love! If I do not love you, then I will be finding faults with you. In other words, love covers everything. We have to have God's love. Sincere and genuine love is missing in the society.

How do you create love in the hearts of the loveless?

We have to educate them. They have to be true to their own word. We have to give them the knowledge in the right direction.

How do you give them the knowledge?

It starts from the very beginning, from childhood. The Bible says in Proverbs: 22:6 "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." Once a mother of a one year old child asked me when should she start training her child? I told her: You are already one year and nine months late! You should have started immediately when you came to know you were pregnant. How can you train a child when he is not born? When a pregnant woman reads good things, the child (in the



womb) knows that. The child will also hear the good music. If husband and wife are fighting, fighting, fighting, the unborn baby feels that.

Is the training of children left to parents or is the Church also involved in their moral training?

Parents have to provide the first stage of training. The children are not at home all the time; they are also at schools. So, they are subject to the authorities and society. So it is the responsibility of the parents as well as the community at large. Only then we will be able to produce good and helpful citizens.

I understand you believe in having the healing power through prayer. Would you like to share some of your experiences? How did you develop this ability of healing with prayer?

The Bible says: Ask! And it shall be given to you! What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them (Mark 11:24). I asked Him with the sincerity of my heart. I did not want [this ability] for selfish reasons, but because I wanted to help the community. I wanted to help everyone who was in need. The rich may go to doctors and to hospitals, but the poor cannot afford to go. So I wanted to help them. So, God has given me the gift of healing.

When did you find out that you had this gift of healing?

In 1968, I was in Hyderabad, Dakkan, and I visited a hospital. One patient told me that he was only 17 years old and asked me to pray for him because the next morning they were going to amputate his leg! I prayed for him and had the feeling that the Lord had touched him! I told him that he would be healed and he should ask the doctor to reexamine the leg before he tried to amputate it. The next morning the doctor reexamined him and could not believe that the leg was cured, and he wanted to know what had happened? That was the first time

I realized the healing power of prayer.

Did you ever have an experience when a prayer did not work, and God did not heal the sick?

Yes, because if the other party, the patient, does not believe, it would not take place! It is by faith. You have to have the faith in the power of prayer. You give your faith and receive the healing! There are so many people that I prayed for, but they did not believe, therefore, they did not receive this. But there are so many who believed, who had faith. Some of them were even suffering from cancer, who have been healed. I do not charge anything. If I charged, then this gift would be gone. It would become a business.

On behalf of The Muslim Sunrise, thank you for your time.

Thank you. It was a great honor for me! ♦

Perspectives

Freedom of Speech: A Frankenstein Monster?

By Falahud Din Shams, Editor

Freedom of speech is a wonderful concept. Being exposed to a multitude of voices and views is constructive and educational. Be it in a newspaper, on radio, or on television, we find opposing views expressed on just about everything.

With the power of remote control, we can select and listen to those who confirm our views. Before the remote control era, there were hard times. It was not just the limited number of channels but the effort required to get up from the sofa to change the channel.

Theoretically, at least, this hopelessness should have produced balanced views among Democrats and Republicans. We were stuck listening to both sides. I don't think it helped. It just made us madder about the people of the other party as they hogged the time on TV.

On the cover of freedom of speech, some have misused this precious value. I am not just referring to pornographic literature and movies. I am talking about indecent expressions in areas of religion and politics. I know we cannot win the First Amendment debate. But we can discuss the decency of



politically correct. Freedom of expression is limited by the barriers we have erected around it. We just don't want to admit it. That will also be politically incorrect.

Defining blasphemy is very simple. If you call me filthy names and insult me, you will be considered an indecent person. The decency in our society requires that you do

Defining blasphemy is very simple. If you call me filthy names and insult me, you will be considered an indecent person. The decency in our society requires that you do not use foul and filthy language about another person. If you were to make the same kind of remarks about God or one of the religious figures such as prophets, you will be considered to be blasphemous.

speech. Most specifically, we can discuss blasphemous speech.

Most Americans probably don't know the definition of blasphemy. They know it has something to do with religion. That's something they don't want to get into an open discussion on. It would not be

not use foul and filthy language about another person. If you were to make the same kind of remarks about God or one of the religious figures such as prophets, you will be considered to be blasphemous. Blasphemy is simply indecent talk about a divine person or God Himself.

Salman Rushdie was not the first person to write blasphemy against the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa}. Even the Pope announced that he considered Rushdie's book to be blasphemous. Muslims showed an emotional reaction, and Ayatollah Khomeini even announced a price on his head.

The debate about Rushdie centered on freedom of expression and not on decency. The simple fact is that he was being indecent and therefore committed blasphemy. The punishment for blasphemy is not death. Actually it is nothing. It is left to God.

The worst blasphemy that people spoke about God had to do with Mary, the mother of Jesus. The allegation has been made that Jesus is a begotten Son of God. This implies that God had a relationship with Mary as His wife (God forbid). In the Holy Qur'an, Allah has referred to it in the following words:

"No knowledge have they thereof, nor had their fathers. Monstrous is the word that comes out of their mouths. They speak nothing but a lie." (Al-Kahf)

Crucial in this discussion is that the Qur'an does not prescribe corporal or physical punishment by any human being.

In relation to the same incidence, the Jews also committed blasphemy against Mary^{ra}. She was a pious woman, but the Jews blamed her for having an illegitimate child. The Holy Qur'an refers to it as a grievous calumny or false charge against her. In Sura Al-Nisa it says: "For their disbelief and for their uttering against Mary a grievous calumny." Yet no punishment was prescribed.

The Holy Qur'an has termed these blasphemies against God and Mary^{ra} as the monstrous word and a grievous insult. Yet, the feelings of today's Muslims have not been agitated enough to put a price on the head of every Christian and Jew. But when it comes to blasphemy against the Holy Prophet^{sa}, it is a different story altogether. Mullahs can really let their emotions go wild. That's when they kill their own brothers, destroy their own properties and burn their own buildings.

But interestingly enough, there was a case of blasphemy against the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa} in his lifetime. It was of such seriousness that the Holy Qur'an mentioned it in Sura Al-Munafiqoon.

Some background of this story is in order.

Abdullah bin Ubbye was the leader of Medina. He had politically situated himself such that all tribes, including the Jews in Medina, chose him as their king. His crown

was on order, and as soon as it arrived, the ceremonies could begin.

Meanwhile, the Muslims of Medina invited the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa} to migrate to Medina, which he accepted. The presence of the Prophet in Medina was noticeable and it became obvious that Abdullah had no chance of being the king of Medina. The real king had arrived and the whole city knew it.

Abdullah would make disgusting remarks about and scheme against the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa}, while outwardly Abdullah would project that he had accepted Islam. The remarks referred to in the Holy Qur'an state that he called the Prophet the meanest or the lowest of all the people in Medina (God forbid). He also made the claim that the noblest person of Medina (meaning Abdullah himself) would drive out the meanest from the city.

Aside from the fact that God or the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa} did not issue any verdict of punishment for Abdullah, Muslims were furious. Upon one indication

from the Prophet^{sa}, any Muslim would have killed Abdullah. But no such punishment was to be given for the blasphemy against the Prophet.

Here is the interesting opportunity that came up. Abdullah's son came to the Prophet and asked for his permission to kill his father. His argument had to do with the tribal customs among the Arabs. He stated that if someone else kills him, his tribe would take revenge even if it took many generations. But, if he killed his own father, there would be no revenge. The tribe could not take revenge against itself. Later on, the Prophet forbade him to take any such step. He told him to leave his father alone. The Prophet even performed the funeral prayer of Abdullah against the objections of his companions.

There will always be people with filthy mouths and indecent expressions. They exploit the precious freedom of speech through filthy writings, cartoons or indecent expressions. They don't just exist in ignorant and uneducated people living in third world

countries. They exist in the land of the free also.

You see it has nothing to do with freedom of speech. It has to do with standards of decency.

A preacher calls the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa} hateful names or some cartoonist draws a cartoon depicting him as a terrorist. All that it reflects is their indecency and ignorance. It shows the kind of indecent social circle they belong to. Freedom of speech only helps to get their inner true picture out in public. You see, decent criticism under the freedom of speech would be to discuss and debate the teachings and philosophies of other faiths as civilized people without casting aspersions on anyone.

Muslims are commanded in the Holy Qur'an not to insult other religions or religious leaders, or even idols. It takes patience but we need to show that we are decent people and will not abuse the right of freedom of speech.

That is the principle that can set us free. ♦

Sir George Bernard Shaw in 'The Genuine Islam,' Vol. 1, No. 8, 1936.

"If any religion had the chance of ruling over England, nay Europe within the next hundred years, it could be Islam."

"I have always held the religion of Muhammad in high estimation because of its wonderful vitality. It is the only religion which appears to me to possess that assimilating capacity to the changing phase of existence which can make itself appeal to every age. I have studied him - the wonderful man and in my opinion far from being an anti-Christ, he must be called the Savior of Humanity."

"I believe that if a man like him were to assume the dictatorship of the modern world he would succeed in solving its problems in a way that would bring it the much needed peace and happiness: I have prophesied about the faith of Muhammad that it would be acceptable to the Europe of tomorrow as it is beginning to be acceptable to the Europe of today."



The Lockhart White Report

Mary Lockhart White
Executive Director
Community Action Partnership of Lake County, IL

America, Let's Celebrate CAP

In this column, we are always highlighting our efforts to help people and change lives, but May, National Community Action Month, is a special time set aside for us to really celebrate. Throughout the country, people from all walks of life gather at various town hall meetings, dinners, awards banquets, community festivals, and open houses to experience how Community Action is making America a better place to live.

We have a lot to celebrate this year, but we have a lot of work ahead of us. Before Hurricane Katrina, New Orleans and the Gulf Coast were populated with thousands of low-income people. They went about their lives, virtually unnoticed by the rest of America. Very few people, save for the local Community Action Agencies that are helping them become self-sufficient, knew the daily challenges and obstacles they face.

That all changed when the hurricane blasted through the Gulf Coast and single-handedly catapulted poverty onto the national spotlight. Camera crews, photographers, and journalists from across the world camped out and captured images and stories of people stuck on rooftops, languishing at overcrowded convention centers, and wading through chest-deep, contaminated water that were so horrific and shocking that virtually the entire country stopped what they were doing to focus on poverty.

There was outrage and anger, telethons, and fundraisers, and an enormous outpouring of offers to help hurricane victims get back on their feet after having suffered for days without food, water, and shelter. The media coverage continued for weeks after. Newspapers ran column after column lamenting the part poverty played in the evacuation of the Gulf Coast. On cable news shows, elected officials lobbed verbal attacks at each other for the lack of response. And network affiliates told of the innovative ways local communities were helping the hurricane victims.

Then, as the holidays approached, the media attention subsided. Gone were the round-the-clock coverage, graphic photos, and heart-wrenching articles. The media went back to covering stories about teenagers gone missing on spring break and the latest celebrity breakups. Community Action Agencies, however, were there long after the media packed up their klieg lights, cameras, and film. They were a significant part of the national relief efforts and responded with an outpouring of support and donations, and offers of help and shelter.

Community Action Agencies have continued to help the residents of the Gulf Coast months after the hurricane has all but faded from national attention because the devastation is so widespread and requires the type of commitment and dedication that Community Action Agencies have possessed for more than 40 years. Such commitment and dedication is not dictated by ratings or trends, it is born out of the Promise of Community Action to help people and change lives.

The hurricane was probably the worst crisis experienced by all residents of the Gulf Coast, but it really took its toll on those living in poverty. They were the ones that did not have enough money to escape, or to rent a hotel room, or buy extra food for their children. This was what they faced in a major national disaster—but many of them feel like the tide of economic uncertainty washes over them everyday, there are just no cameras present to capture it.

Annual Awards Dinner and Report to The Community

COMMUNITY ACTION PARTNERSHIP OF LAKE COUNTY

"POWER OF ONE"

Friday, May 27, 2006
7 PM to 10 PM



For tickets, contact Lisa Ward, 847249.4330



Helping People. Changing Lives.

Banquet Information

Community Action Partnership of Lake County's "The Power of One Banquet," celebrates more than 40 years of Helping People to Help Themselves and recognizing community partnerships, volunteers and significant corporate partnerships.

Lincolnshire Marriott Resort
Ten Marriott Drive, Lincolnshire, IL

Community Action Agencies know this all too well. They witness the disparity of poverty daily in the faces of the 13 million Americans they help turn hope into reality. In fact, Community Action Agencies were there before the storm even hit, because they are always there to help people and change lives.

Lake County, Illinois residents have a chance to experience how this effort is underway in their local community by attending Community Action Partnership of Lake County's "Power of One" Annual Awards Dinner and Report to the Community, May 27th. The event is being held in honor of National Community Action Month, an annual celebration held in May to pay tribute to the poverty-fighting efforts of Community Action Agencies across the country.

In addition, we invite you to participate in a community simulation in poverty, "Walk A Mile in The Shores of Poverty, May 10th, 10 AM to 2 PM at the CAP Banquet & Meeting Center, 1200 Glen Flora Ave., Waukegan. Participants will assume the roles of 26 different families living in poverty. It's an experience you will never forget because poverty knows no boundaries.

It is a time for the entire community to learn about our programs and how they are helping the county's low-income residents change their lives. Although Hurricane Katrina caused havoc and tragedy in the wake of the powerful storm, it has served as a reminder that we need to work together to end poverty. We invite you to attend our "Power of One" banquet to learn how they can join us in this critical effort.

We invite Americans from all walks of life to join the Community Action network as we celebrate National Community Action Month.

58th Annual Ahmadiyya Muslim Convention

September 1-3, 2006

Dulles Expo Center • Chantilly, Virginia

Islam is equality. Islam is peace. Islam is trust in God. We invite you to join the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community

for informative and richer perspectives on Islam. For more information, Phone: 301.879.0115



"It's not an ordinary convention. The Ahmadiyya Muslim Convention is a wonderful experience and an opportunity to learn."

-- Dr. John Hanson, Associate Professor of History and Director of African Studies Program at Indiana University.

www.alislam.org

The
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